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Official Magazine - Australia



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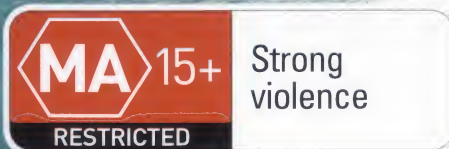
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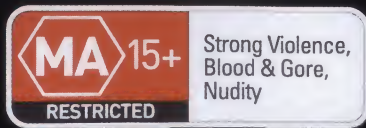
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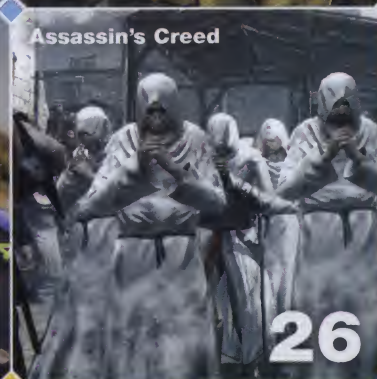
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## EDITOR'S LETTER



made), *Guitar Hero III*, *Kane & Lynch*, *Assassin's Creed*, *Call of Duty 4*, *Ratchet & Clank*, *Haze* and *Need for Speed ProStreet*. That's more than a game a week for EVERY WEEK OF THE SEASON! And that's only counting the 'crazy-hot, would donate a kidney just to play it' games.

While the flood of games is about to hit, there has been a slight hiccup in the Pattison household. I thought I'd made a decisive, first strike for the gaming season by putting my foot down and refusing to let my HDTV be used for any more of my wife's *ER* viewing. She took it surprisingly well, I thought. Then I tried to hop online and download *Warhawk*, only to find our broadband connection had been castrated back to dial-up for the rest of the month because she had been busy downloading the new *ER* episodes for her iPod. I guess I'll see you online next month. Maybe.

**NARAYAN PATTISON**  
Editor

*Narayan Pattison*

PS3 online: **The Duude**

Spring is in the air. And you know what that means? We get to sit back and enjoy more games releases crammed into three months than we see during the rest of the year combined. *Heavenly Sword*, *Stuntman*, *DIRT*, *SKATE* and *Warhawk* are leading the charge in September, then hot on their heels we've got *The Simpsons Game* (see page 54 for our look at this amazing recreation of the best TV show ever

## Simpsons scene we'd love to see...



### LUKE REILLY

I'd love to pit Homer up against some dogs. Or some bees. Or the dogs with bees in their mouths, and when they bark they shoot bees at you. It's that or set Bart loose in the forbidden zone. Which one? Radioactive, smallpox, eternal midnight? No, the one with the UNI-CLAMS!

PS3 online: **Capt Flashheart**



### MARK SERRELS

Alls I wants is a decent dose of Ralph Wiggum ("Hi Principal Skinner! Hi Super Nintendo Chalmers!"). Oh, and since everyone's impersonation of my 'shexy' Scottish accent sounds like Groundskeeper Willie, maybe he should get some action as well.

PS3 online: **Serreles**



### PHILLIP JORGE

I just want to see Rainier Wolfcastle make it in somehow. I'd be damn surprised if he didn't. He could run on PowerSauce Bars and spend the whole time playing McBain, blasting anybody and everybody who got in his way. "MENDOZA!!!!!!"

PS3 online: **PhilLipO**



### NICK O'SHEA

I really hope they tribute themselves by including playable versions of the videogames that have featured in episodes of *The Simpsons*. I'd love to get a hands-on with classics like *Touch of Death*, *Bonestorm* and, of course, Lee Carvalho's *Putting Challenge*.

PS3 online: **Sidochrome**



### ANTHONY O'CONNOR

I want some old school Simpsons bizzo in the game. Back when Conan O'Brien was writing. Bring forth the monorail! Oh, and Planet of the Apes - the musical. I have NO IDEA how you'd fit it in but I'm not making the bloody game! Get off my back! Jesus.

PS3 online: **stoxxy242**



### JAMES ELLIS

Two words - Radioactive Man. "My eyes! The goggles do nothing!" Totally classic. Besides, I've been wanting to beat up Fall Out Boy for ages now. The band, actually, 'Thks fr th Mmrs'? What, are you too good for vowels? Maybe it's an emo thing...

PS3 online: **gtfaster49**

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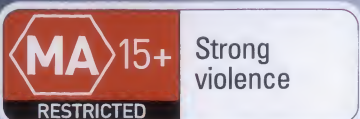
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SOME SECRETS CANNOT BE KEPT

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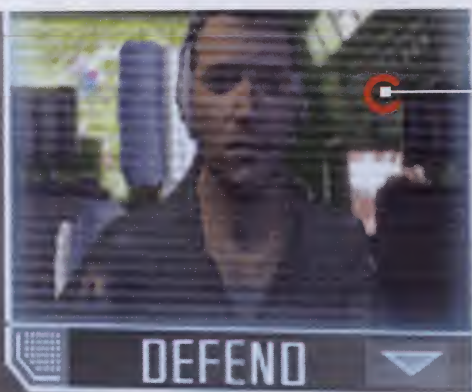
# NEWS

SCREENSHOT OF THE MONTH

Edited by Mark Serrels

- Play TV • PSP GO! • Rock Band
- Wipeout HD • Civilisation
- and much, much more...

TARGET DE



## CHEER UP MATE

Who's this grumpy bugger? Well as always, we can only speculate as to the purpose of this dude. He can't be a pilot, he's dressed far too casually for that. He's possibly one of those pencil pushing types who peppers you with enemy 'schematics' and the like. Not like us burly fighter pilot types...



Wingman

## PRETTY BUILDINGS!

Not much to say here we guess, besides the fact that the buildings in this as yet untitled Tom Clancy game are looking spectacular. Despite the scope of the environments, Ubisoft is making sure the detail is off the charts.

SPEED 800



## OCCUPIED...

So we're guessing this area shows you the status of your fighter jet or whatever, so at the moment it looks like the plane is in pretty good nick. But what's this 'on'/'off' business? We have no idea: maybe its like that little light that tells you when someone's using the toilet. Yep, that *must* be it...



TROYED

### THE BOSS?

Without doubt this starchy fellow must be your boss. Look at him, he's wearing a tie *and* his shirt is buttoned up – *all the way*. Plus he's got grey hair. We suspect this guy may be prepping you with the latest missions, sporting a stiff upper lip, and possibly even a posh English accent. Tally ho, 'old bean, etc. We already hate this stupid guy. Go away, no-one likes you.

12:08:00



Escort the Ghosts.

### KA-BOOM!

This is, without doubt, a big ass explosion of biblical proportions. How good does it look! Never mind the fact that you probably took out a gajillion innocent civilians with one blast, and worry not about those thousands of fatherless children. Kill 'em all and let God sort 'em out. That's what our grandma says.

### IT'S NOT WWII!

Thank the good Lord above, this game is *not* set during the Second World War. We're no aviation experts, but this game looks like it's set in a similar 'near future' setting to *Ghost Recon* and *Rainbow Six*, meaning that we'll probably be behind the wheel of some high tech machinery to say the least.

### ERM...

This is probably something to do with weapons and such like, but it could be a new flavoured doughnut from Krispy Kremes for all we know. It might signify the *amount* of missiles in your arsenal, but that's just an (un)educated guess.



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PS3 PS2 PSP

# ONE GIANT LIEPZIG FOR PS3

Play TV announced for PlayStation 3

While there was little in the way of new game announcements at GC in Leipzig (Sony chose to instead focus on its stellar Christmas lineup) there were some new hardware announcements that look set to expand the range of uses for both the PS3 and the PSP, utilising the connectivity between these two monstrous multimedia devices.

Perhaps the most significant of these announcements was regarding the upcoming Play TV. Essentially a dual HD television tuner, Play TV also allows you to record shows to your PS3 hard drive.

Working in a similar way to TiVo, this new piece of hardware can also encode recorded TV shows for use on the move with your PSP. All the mod cons that come with TiVo are applicable with Play TV, including the ability to pause live TV at any point during the show.

And the Play TV tuner also has the ability to record at 1080p, featuring an intuitive menu system that allows users to easily choose and record shows seven days in advance. And since Play TV will be working in sync with your PS3, it's ridiculously easy to update via the firmware

upgrades that frequently occur.

The real humdinger of the package, however, comes in the remote play functionality, which allows for some pretty mindblowing interactivity between the PS3 and PSP. For example, if you have access to a Wi-Fi online point, you could essentially programme your PlayStation 3 to record your favourite TV show using the PSP, from literally miles away.

But it gets better, after recording this, you could essentially upload this recorded show, remotely, to your PSP for your viewing pleasure. This sort of

interconnectivity could essentially breathe new life into your PSP and make the PS3 the centre of your home entertainment system. Considering the potential for web updates and the fact that the specs of Play TV out match almost every HDTV tuner on the market, we could be looking at a future proof investment.

Play TV has only been announced for Europe thus far for early 2008, but we're hoping that Australia will see an official release date sooner rather than later. There's no way Sony can restrict this awesome tech to the EU.



# READY STEADY GO!

Meet the Go! team

At GC in Leipzig a number of new features were announced for the PSP, further cementing its reputation as one of the most flexible portable devices on the market. Announced under the tagline 'PSP Go!', these new features have been designed to help users communicate with the wider online world, taking advantage of the PSP's Wi-Fi internet capabilities.

First up is Go! Messenger, a phone and messaging service that lets PSP owners communicate with each other via an on-screen keyboard. Those wishing to take it further, however, can easily create voice and even video messages via a headset and the PSP's Go! Camera attachable. This package will be available in January as part of an upcoming firmware update, so keep your eyes peeled.

Also available in February is Go! Explore, a small device that plugs into the USB slot, turning the PSP into a portable GPS system that helps you plan routes, and create 3D maps of the surrounding areas. Mapping out areas of interests, in addition to speed traps and the like, Go! Explore could end up being great value for money, considering the extortionate prices GPS systems go for these days.

The third announcement is specific to the UK at this point, but we have a feeling it will inevitably find its way

across to Australia. As part of a deal with SKY (Foxtel in Australia) Sony is set to launch a service, making movies, sporting events and TV shows available for download on a pay per view basis. Through this set up, users will also be able to subscribe to certain television channels.

All in all, these updates mean that the PSP will be packing more features than James Bond's Rolex. Is there anything this little bugger can't do? End poverty? Stop terrorism? Anything's possible...



## WHAT THEY SAID...

**"Blu-ray has definitely given us a lot of legroom. If you think down the road, well maybe the next UT beyond this one, on Blu-ray disc, we might fill the whole damn disc with all the cool stuff the mod makers make."**

Mark Rein, big boss of epic games, just can't get enough of that Blu-ray goodness... neither can we big fella, neither can we.

**"DVD size is absolutely not a factor that we consider when designing our games... and PGR4 is no exception."**

... while Bizarre Games go into damage control after a staffer claimed that day and night versions of their tracks had to be scrapped due to the lack of space on standard DVD9s. Well, we guess *Gran Turismo 5* won't have that problem...

**"If they think it's difficult, they should get out of the ring."**

Ninja Gaiden Sigma director, Yosuke Hayashi, on some developers claiming coding for PS3 is too tough. If you can't make a good PS3 game, there are other developers who can (and have). Shit or get off the pot. Or ask for more money.

**"Push the violence! Push the sex!"**

Factor 5 president Julian Eggebrecht to other developers after he called *Lair's* ratings certificate submission a charade. To be approved for a Teen rating in the US, Factor 5 had to cut much of the blood from the game but was permitted to allow screaming, burning bodies. Unfortunately, they also cut out the fun, the good controls and pretty much anything else that makes the game worth buying.

### GIVEAWAY

## STAYING CLASSY

If you don't like Will Ferrell, you don't like comedy, it's that simple. His latest movie, *Blades of Glory*, takes the ridiculous 'sport' of ice skating and drags every last laugh out of its already hilarious subject matter.

Ferrell is Chazz Michael Michaels, the sexually charged bad boy of the ice skating circuit, while *Napolean Dynamite's* Jon Heder plays the fragile Jimmy MacElroy. After skating each other into a tie in the world championships, both Chazz and Jimmy earn themselves a lifetime ban from skating, for beating the crap out of each other. But there is a tiny loophole that allows them to compete in the mixed pairs... with each other.

*Blades of Glory* is a comedy masterpiece you won't want to miss, and the recent DVD release is the

perfect opportunity to check it out.

We have five copies to give away, as part of an awesome Will Ferrell pack that features *Anchorman*, *Old School*, *Night at the Roxbury* and *Superstar*. To enter all you have to do is answer the following question, and send it to us under the headline 'Will Ferrell giveaway' following the instructions below.



**Question:**  
In *Anchorman*, Ron Burgundy's catchphrase is...

- A You stay gassy, San Diego
- B You stay classy, San Diego
- C You stay sassy, San Diego

#### HOW TO ENTER

Send entries to [ops@derwenthoward.com.au](mailto:ops@derwenthoward.com.au) with the name of the competition in the subject line, or post them to OPS Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355 with the name of the competition CLEARLY MARKED on the envelope. Alternatively head to [www.gameplayer.com.au](http://www.gameplayer.com.au) and enter all promos there. Include the name of the competition, your name, age, email address, contact number, and more importantly, your full address and postcode! All competitions close on November 3. All competitions are open to residents of Australia and New Zealand.

### WHAT'S HOT AND WHAT'S NOT...

#### WARHAWK

Stop being awesome!  
We need to do work!

#### ROCK BAND

God gave Rock and Roll to everyone...

#### PLAY TV

Give us an Aus release date now, dammit!

#### FOLDING HOME

Was recently updated: who cares?

#### MOH: AIRBORNE

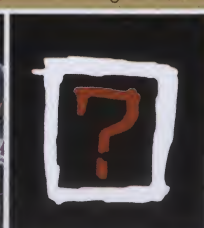
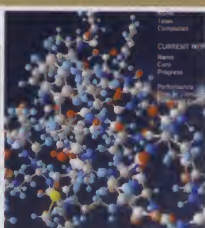
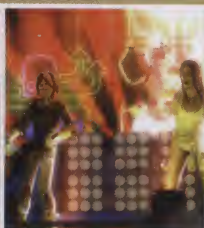
Can you say 'redefines mediocrity'?

#### FIFA 08

Looks cool, but no 5v5 online for Aus? WHY?!

#### PS2 Games?

What the hell happened to new PS2 games?!?!?!?



HOT!

NOT!



# INFO NUDGE

Everything else that's fit to print (and some that's not)



## REACH OUT

Reachout.com.au is the most accessed mental health website for youngsters, providing useful advice on drugs, coping skills, and numerous other issues for troubled young adults. In an attempt to spread the message they've created a new flash RPG that's well worth a look. A close relative of *The Sims*, the game helps empower young people in difficult situations. Be sure to check it out at [www.reachoutcentral.com.au](http://www.reachoutcentral.com.au)



## STRANGLING THE COMPETITION

Congratulations to Paul Bethencourt who won our recent *Stranglehold* competition. After being treated to an eight hour demo of the upcoming game, Paul and his brother were taken to the Golden Century Chinese restaurant for some delicious Yum Cha, where they were joined by our very own Mark Serrels, who managed to weasel his way into the proceedings for a delicious free meal. Well done to Paul, and thanks to everyone who entered.



## 5 ON 5 FIFA?

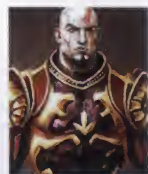
We were pretty ecstatic when an online five versus five mode was announced for the latest version of EA's *FIFA 08*; but sadly visions of a realistic soccer experience with tight marking and clever runs all flashed before our eyes when we were informed that this feature will only be utilised in European editions of the game, due to the poor connections we backward Aussies have to deal with. Mr John Howard, will you get on this decent broadband business ASAP please?



## LOCO ROCO

Fans of the cult PSP classic rejoice, the upcoming sequel, released exclusively on the PlayStation Network, has been given a release date... in Japan at least. *LocoRoco Cocoreccho* is set for release on September 21st, so by the time you read this magazine, those lucky Japanese will already be playing with those lovable blobs of happiness to their hearts content. Sadly, as of press time, there is no info on release dates for any other regions, including Australia. Can't be long now though. We have absolutely no doubt you'll be controlling those infuriatingly cute Loco Roco before the year is out.

# TOP TEN: GAMING HARDMEN



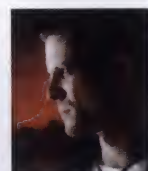
**1 Kratos**  
Let's face facts. Was it ever going to be anyone else? Number one on account of the fact

that he legitimately took a God 'down to Chinatown', and then fully kicked the crap out of Zeus himself. Come on, the only way you can beat that is by bitchslapping Jesus. Undisputed hardest guy in gaming full stop.



**2 Solid Snake**  
When you're a genetically modified super soldier, tweaked from the genes of the

world's greatest warrior, complete with Nano Technology and an absolutely barnstorming mullet, its safe to say that you can kick some arse. Impossible to kill. Now with added porno tache.



**3 Max Payne**  
Here is a guy that gets shot. A lot. And he doesn't go to a hospital, or cry like a little bitch, he doesn't

even use a bandaid - he just takes some painkillers... painkillers. They don't heal anything! Think about that...



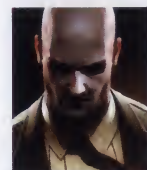
**4 Sephiroth**  
Da baddest man on the planet; just does not give a toss about anybody but himself, and would literally

punch a baby to death for a sandwich. How that little emo, cry-baby Cloud ever defeated him is beyond us.



**5 Tommy Vercetti**  
Nicknamed the 'Harwood Butcher', how could the videogaming equivalent of Tony

Montana not make this list. If all the GTA main characters got together and had a bit of soiree, our money would be on Tommy Vercetti, undoubtedly the most ruthless of the bunch.



**6 Agent 47**  
Come on, the dude has a barcode tattooed on the back of his dome; any tattoo above neck level

equals automatic 'hardness' credibility. And his name is a number - what's your name? Dave or something? That's not cool. Agent 47... that's cool... And that's not to mention his 'stylin' bald do. This guy is tough...

**7 Jackie Estacado**

Not only is this dude a top notch assassin who would blow your brains out in a New York minute, but he also wields an unholy power that allows him to literally rip your heart out... and eat it. The definition of the guy you wouldn't want to meet in a dark alley.

**8 Alex Mercer**

This guy is a newcomer, the shapeshifting star of the upcoming *Prototype*. We have no real idea exactly how hard Mercer is, but a rep at Vivendi claimed he could rip Kratos in half. At this point we're afraid to contradict him...

**9 Gabe Logan**

This man is a pixelated Jack Bauer, right down to the multiple exclamations of 'DAMMIT!' when things inevitably go wrong. A gruff, no-nonsense, old school hard man, Mr Logan also proudly sports the haircut of a hero. Don't mess.

**10 Duke Nukem**

He came to kick ass and chew bubblegum... and he's all out of bubblegum. Sadly, the long promised *Duke Nukem Forever* will likely never see the light of day, but we could reminisce about the cigar chewing badass all day long. One of the most quotable game icons of all time. He wears sunglasses, so he must be cool.



■ Buzz would regret pulling the 'I've got your nose' trick, after Captain Q introduced him to the 'I've got your decapitated head' trick...

PS3 PS2 PSP

## BUZZ OFF

The latest instalment of the *Buzz!* franchise has just been announced for the PS3, and it looks set to redefine the series with some awesome new features, the most prominent of which is the addition of user created content.

Which, in a nutshell, means that you can create your own questions and actually use them in the game itself, foiling all those smart arses who have memorised all the answers. Take that idiots!

Titled *Buzz! Quiz TV*, the developers are hoping to create an online community where players can upload their own questions for download, creating a *Buzz!* environment where players will never run out of questions.

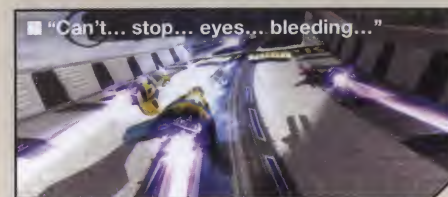
Sounds like a real step forward for the franchise. Watch this space for more info.

PS3 PS2 PSP

## THE GAME OF THE FUTURE... TODAY!

It's possible that you may already have heard about the HD version of *Wipeout* heading to the PS3 Network, but what the hell, let's reiterate. A high definition reworking of the original *Wipeout*, the game runs at a butter smooth 60fps in full 1080p.

But Sony has only recently let players get their hands on the upgrade, and reports coming back are universally positive. The slick gameplay seems to remain, making the game instantly familiar to veterans of the series, but from what we've seen the cosmetic upgrade is pretty substantial. More than a mere resolution bump, the textures are looking remarkably next gen. This release could end up being one of the highlights of the fast developing PlayStation Store. Look for a more detailed hands-on of this game very soon.



■ "Can't... stop... eyes... bleeding..."



# GAME DESIGN 101

## The Power of Hair...

**Let's talk about hair.** Specifically, videogame character hair, and what it tells us about the character, the game and the platform it's on.

First up is Lara Croft. You may have heard of her, but you may not realise what a story her hair tells. Not only was it a demonstration of the PlayStation's graphical muscle, it also symbolised Lara herself. Tightly bound and controlled, her long braid nevertheless flowed and moved freely whilst remaining tethered to its roots.

Well, need we say it? Like her braid, Lara was raised in a very strict, 'proper' way, yet she moves easily through the world. She remains rooted to her origins (Croft manor) and part of her appeal has always been the prospect of what would happen were she to be set fully free...

Then there's Snake. Physically, there's little to really distinguish him from any number of generic stealth-action heroes, except for that glorious mullet of his. Business at the front, party at the back – just like Snake and his games. Both of which have their own unique, and at times questionable, style, mixing the serious with the absurd.

Think we're making too much of an incidental detail? Think again. In videogames, there's no such thing as an 'incidental detail'. Every single element in the game – every pixel, every soundbite, every aspect of the design – has been deliberately created and incorporated into the overall product for a reason. Even if that reason is 'the developer is being half-arsed and lazy', it still tells you something important about the game. The devil, after all, is in the details.



PS3 PS2 PSP

## IT'S ONLY ROCK AND ROLL (BUT WE LIKE IT)

**Tired of our excessive Rock Band coverage?** Too bad, because here's some more.

It has been confirmed that *Rock Band* is coming to PS2 as well as PS3, and that the game will be released early in 2008. Some killer new songs have also been announced to whet your rockin' appetite.

- The Rolling Stones 'Gimme Shelter'
- Deep Purple 'Highway Star'
- Soundgarden 'Black Hole Sun'
- Red Hot Chili Peppers 'Dani California'
- The Clash
- 'Should I Stay or Should I Go'

- Faith No More 'Epic'
- Beastie Boys 'Sabotage'
- Radiohead 'Creep'
- Jet 'Are You Gonna Be My Girl'
- Nine Inch Nails
- 'The Hand That Feeds'
- Smashing Pumpkins
- 'Cherub Rock'
- OK Go 'Here It Goes Again'
- KISS 'Detroit Rock City'
- Hole 'Celebrity Skin'
- Pixies 'Wave of Mutilation'

We are frothing at the mouth, you should be too. Start frothing now, damn you! We demand frothage.

### GIVEAWAY

## LET'S GET PIRATEY

While piracy was a pretty glamorous industry back in the day, today the whole scene seems to have lost its lustre. Let's put it this way, swashbuckling: cool. Downloading movies from the internet: not quite so cool.

And that's why we're giving away five copies of the ultimate pirate package to you, featuring the first two *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies on Blu-ray, and the recent game. For the chance to win this pack, all



you must do is answer this simple question and send the answer to us marked 'Pirates giveaway', following the instructions given on page 15.

### Question:

Which of these pirates actually existed?

- A Captain Jack Sparrow
- B Black Fart
- C Black Bart

Nominated for "Best Handheld Game"  
E3 2007 Game Critics Awards

# Dead Head Fred

REVENGE...  
HAVE YOU GOT THE HEAD FOR IT?

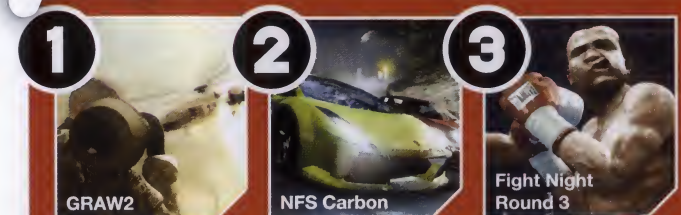
The mob thought they'd killed me, wrong, I'm back, headless but not brainless. Deadhead, huh. I'm an ex private dick with guts and I crave revenge. It's time for those shiny-shoed wise guys to face the music. Some smart detective work and my ingenious interchangeable head scam will see me nail the creeps.

out 12th October  
Available from all good retailers

AFA INTERACTIVE D3 PUBLISHER VICIOUS CYCLE  
EXCLUSIVELY FOR PlayStation Portable  
MA 15+ RESTRICTED Strong Coarse Language Strong Graphic Violence



# TOP 10 GAMES CHART



Rank	Title	Category	Distributor
4	Formula One	Racing	Sony
5	F.E.A.R.	FPS	Vivendi
6	Transformers	Action	Atari
7	The Darkness	FPS	2K
8	Rainbow Six Vegas	FPS	Ubisoft
9	Armored Core 4	Action	Sega
10	Virtua Tennis 3	Sports	Sega

## RELEASE SCHEDULE



Format	Title	Category	Distributor
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### NOVEMBER

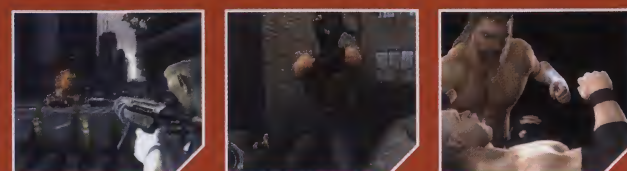
PS3	Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	Action	Atari
PS3/PS2	WWE: SmackDown vs. Raw 2008	Fighting	THQ
PS3	Assassin's Creed	Adventure	Ubisoft
PS3	Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	FPS	Activision
PS3/PS2	Need for Speed ProStreet	Racing	EA
PS3	Haze	FPS	Ubisoft
PS2	Naruto: Ultimate Ninja 2	Adventure	Atari
PS3/PS2	The Simpsons Game	Adventure	EA
PS3/PS2	Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	Sports	Atari
PSP	Silent Hill Origins	Horror	Atari
PS3	Unreal Tournament 3	FPS	Red Ant
PS3	Clive Barker's Jericho	FPS	Atari
PS3	Time Crisis 4	Action	Sony
PSP	Wipeout Pulse	Racing	Sony
PS3	Beowulf	Action	Ubisoft
PS3	Ratchet & Clank Future: TOD	Adventure	Sony
PSP	Syphon Filter: Logan's Shadow	Action	Sony
PS2/PSP	Godzilla Unleashed	Fighting	Atari
PS2	Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	Action	Sony
PS3	Conan	Action	THQ

### DECEMBER

PSP	Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	Sports	Atari
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### JANUARY

PSP	N+	PSP	Atari
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## GIVEAWAY

## BULLET BALLET

**John Woo** has always been known for his outlandish, dove-tastic, bullet ballets in the cinematic realm, but thanks to Midway, the Woo-meister has been able to translate this adrenaline fuelled action to the medium of videogames in the form of *Stranglehold*, the spiritual successor to the classic Hong Kong action flick, *Hard Boiled*.

So for those who have always wanted to jump in slow motion, slide down banisters, and slide across desks while shooting two guns simultaneously (i.e. everyone) boy, do we have a deal for you. We have five copies of *Stranglehold* to give away, and as always, participating in this competition is as easy as answering a simple question. Send the answer to us under the tagline 'Stranglehold giveaway' following the instructions given on page 15 to get in the running.

### Question:

Which Woo directed movie brought stars Nicholas Cage and John Travolta together?

- A** Mission Impossible 2
- B** Face Off
- C** Hard Target



## GIVEAWAY

## THE VALHALLA IDENTITY

**After waking up** in a strange land, with no recollection of the past, you must undertake an epic journey to recover your lost memory, and fulfil your mythic destiny. No, it's not the latest plotline from *The Bold and the Beautiful*, and it's most definitely not the Sunday hangover you battled with last weekend. Ladies and Gentlemen, it's *Valhalla Nights* a new RPG developed by K2 exclusively for the little old PSP.

So you know the drill. We have five copies of *Valhalla Nights* to giveaway and our only request is that you answer a question. Send the entries to us marked 'Valhalla giveaway' following the instructions on page 15. Here's the question, comin' atcha:

### Question:

The professional, fancy term for memory loss is...

- A** Amnesia
- B** Aphasia
- C** Alexia





PS3 PS2 PSP

# CIVILISATION

**We spoke to Barry Caudill, the executive producer of the upcoming *Civilization Revolution* about how the latest installment of the Sid Meier's legendary PC franchise would translate to the PS3.**

**OPS: *Civilization* has been a huge franchise on PC, how have you adjusted to the console format? How do you think the game will translate?**

**BC:** We've done several things to reinvent *Civilization* for the console market. First, we sped up the pace so that you can experience all of human history in just a couple of hours.

Second, we upped the ante on the presentation in a big way. In *Civilization Revolution* you'll see lots of intense combat, amazing special effects and a whole new level of style for *Civilization*. Sid's designed the game to keep all of the great addictive gameplay features you expect from *Civ*, with everything mapped perfectly to a controller.

**OPS: Will the game feature any sort of PlayStation Network support, such as online play, or downloadable content in the future?**

**BC:** Absolutely! What good is it to be the greatest ruler in the world if you can't prove it by beating your friends online? We'll provide players with a robust set of online features including ladders, ranked games,

matchmaking and leaderboards. You'll be able to play multiplayer games one-on-one, two-on-two, or four-player free-for-all.

We will also provide downloadable content like new maps, gamer pictures, and the Game of the Week. The GotW is a unique game Firaxis will deliver online each week that you can play single-player as often as you want and then post your best score on the leaderboards.

**OPS: How do you think console audiences will react to *Civilization* in general?**

**BC:** Well, I hope that they jump in and immediately realise how much fun it is to be the leader of one of the great civilizations from history. I hope they end up caring so much about their newly upgraded archer army that they actually think twice about attacking those pesky Romans. I hope they stay up late one night trying to decide whether they should rush spaceship parts to win the space race or whether they should just take the world by force.

I think people will quickly find that it is one of the most engrossing and addictive games of all time.



## BIRD'S EYE VIEW

So you may have noticed that I look a bit, well, *different*, this issue. My eyes have gotten bigger, and my skin a whole lot more yellow. Yep, we've all been 'Simpsonized' this issue, and it was a whole lot of fun. But the whole process of making Simpson versions of ourselves made me notice a few things. Predictably, while all the PlayStation boys wanted to do was add enormous boobs to my poor petite frame, all I did was dress my character in a parade of different outfits. But it got me to thinking, while extensive customisation is usually implemented in 'blokey' games like MMORPG's, this sort of dress up seems to appeal more to women than men. After all, the only way I could convince my girlfriends to get interested in *LittleBigPlanet* was by informing them that they could clothe their little character. I guess girls still want to play dress up at heart.

Jessica Greene, Games Writer

## WINNERS

From the comps in OPS #7

**Shooter:** C Lim. A Herrington. K Skinner-Bell. M Fox. M Worth. J Dekuyer. M Hawes. J Donald. A Hudd. K Steadman **Sunshine:** N Camarda. P Davis. S Shipman. F West. M Wait **300:** B Bradshaw. M Hales. N Glover. D Russell. A Gee. C Janus. M Raggett. J Griffiths. K Lamont. C Enaharo. All other winners notified by phone or email.



GIVEAWAY

## WALLS OF JERICHO

**Clive Barker, the** horror mastermind behind the outstandingly gory *Hellraiser* series, has now turned his grotesque imagination to videogames in the form of Codemasters' latest project *Jericho*.

Playing as the Jericho squad, a Special Forces team dedicated to neutralising paranormal threats, your objective is to restrain the mythical 'Firstborn'. A creature apparently created before Adam and Eve, the Firstborn is a creature that defies regular classification of good and evil, a being that has lingered in the Abyss since the beginning of time awaiting the perfect moment to unleash his power on earth.

As expected *Jericho* focuses upon different aspects of horror and what not, as each team member has a different

para-psychological talent that they can utilise in combat, including gifts such as clairvoyance, exorcism, alchemy and the like. So far, so pant-wettingly scary.

Do you think your nerves can take this sort of psychological punishment? Can you handle the terrifying torment of *Jericho*? If you answered yes, then we have the prize for you (if you answered no, then you are a whimpering wimpy cry baby and we don't like you). The prize is, of course, one of ten copies of *Clive Barker's Jericho*, and all ye must do to enter this competition is answer one simple question and send the answer to us marked 'Jericho giveaway'. See page 15 for entry instructions. Here comes the question kiddies, are you ready? Of course you are...

**Question:**

Clive Barker's novella *The Hellbound Heart* was adapted into which cult classic horror movie?

- A Hellraiser
- B Nightbreed
- C Hellboy





# SURVIVAL OF THE FASTEST



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PSP







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# LETTERS

HAVE YOUR SAY AND  
WIN WARHAWK!



■ "I'm going BALD! I'll solve the problem by pulling ALL MY HAIR OUT!"

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### PS2 WHERE ART THOU?

What the bloody hell are you ingrates doing to this magazine? *PlayStation Magazine* proudly proclaims on the cover at the top that it covers PS2, PSP, and PS3. What a crock of shit. This year there has only been a scant four demo discs supplied – two of which don't even play on the PS2 console. Hell, they don't even boot up, let alone let you watch a couple of trailers! *PlayStation Magazine* was built on the backs of PS2 fans and owners, who supported you with magazine purchases and subscriptions month after month after month. Now what do we get? Discs that won't play (when we actually get a disc) because they are Blu-ray, massively reduced content pertaining to PS2s in the mag, and review after review of games that we can't access because we don't own a PS3 console! We may as well not even read it these days. This sucks!

Michael, via email

You know Michael, our first instinct was to send this email directly to the trash can, seeing as it was totally abusive, nasty, and it had loads of spelling mistakes, but then we thought, we understand your rage. The coverage of PS2 games is reducing. But here's the thing, we can only cover what we're given. We don't MAKE the games, or the demos – we just write about 'em. The amount of PS2 games is decreasing, plus our latest reader surveys indicates people WANT to read about PS3. Quality games like *God of War II*, *Tomb Raider Anniversary* and *Rogue Galaxy* have received, and deserved, plenty of coverage in the mag. We'll cover PS2 as long as it's here, but not at the expense of the most exciting PS3 games.



## WINNER!

Letter of the month wins a copy of *Warhawk*, which, of course, poses a problem for a man without a PS3 yet...



■ "Days of our Lives has just started! Get out of my way, or I blasts my way through!"

## RELEASE STRESS

I heard about Rockstar delaying *GTAIV* until next year. I would just like to say that I think that when it comes to release dates Rockstar is about as reliable as a \$10 hooker – most of its games get delayed. Rockstar shouldn't set release dates until later when it is sure about it. For all those millions of eager fans out there whom you have let down I would just like to say "SHAME ON YOU ROCKSTAR!!!" And one more thing, what the hell is that second quarter 2008 crap? NEXT TIME GIVE A PROPER DAMN RELEASE DATE!!!

Kara, via email

Actually Kara, I think this was pretty much everyone's initial reaction when they heard the crushing news that *GTA* had been delayed. But, despite the fact that you are totally entitled to your insatiable rage, in Rockstar's defence it is rarely late with release dates (in fact, we can't remember another *GTA* game missing deadline). We all know this is best for the franchise – we'd rather wait for the complete experience instead of a rushed product. In the meantime spend your hard earned dollars on the upcoming deluge of other deserving games.

## FAMILY TIES

Hey guys, I'm 12-years-old and was one of the 39 children who had to go to hospital with the flu like symptoms in Canberra last month. Anyway some how, I don't know how; but I managed to get a PS3 out of it. The games that I got were *Resistance*, *Motorstorm*, *The Darkness* and *Spider-Man 3* (one of my younger brother's choices).

The thing is my mum thinks the PS3's superior graphics look exactly like the PS2's lower class graphics (my mum used to play *Crash Bandicoot*). I don't know why my mum would think this because I see many changes that she can't, for example the way you can see bullet holes left in people in *The Darkness*, and the way the mud looks so real in *MotorStorm*. Well I suppose that's mothers for you, but I bet she'll be able to tell immediately if the bed sheet isn't straight.

McKeating, via email

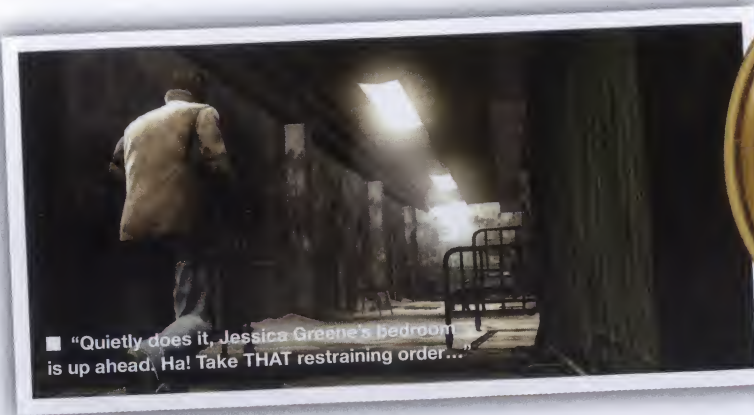
Hey dude, loved the email, but why didn't you leave your name! Now we have to call you by your surname, like Marty McFly from *Back to the Future 2* ("Hey McKeating? Are ya YELLA BELLY?") or 'McLovin' from *Superbad*. Anyways, onto the letter... yep, what is the deal with mothers? Always tryin' to rain on the PS3 parade, telling you to go outside and get fresh air, telling you that new consoles are crap; I mean, they do your laundry and cook awesome dinners, but that's no excuse for dissing the PS3. Our guess is she's trying to wind you up – if she's into *Crash Bandicoot*, show her the new *Ratchet & Clank* trailer, if she still thinks there's no difference we may just have to accept the fact that she is clinically blind.

## SILENCE IS GOLDEN

Seeing all the stunning games that are out and soon to be coming out for the







PS3, I was wondering, with your insider information, whether you could tell me if there will be any more *Silent Hill* games. I LOVED the whole series and film, and think they could do some real justice to it with the PS3's power. *Resident Evil 5* looks fantastic, but I like to be really creeped out for the whole thing, not the shock horror that I get from the *Resident* games.  
**Bob, via email**

Glad you asked mate, 'cause we actually had a tiny bit of coverage in our E3 feature in issue #7 regarding a new *Silent Hill* currently in development for the PS3. At the moment details are so thin on the ground we literally know next to nothing about this game, except that it's currently in development by an American studio called 'The Collective' and the main character is called Alex. Look out for a full preview of the game soon.

## FRUITY

I have a problem. I am a guy. A blokey guy. I am a drummer in a heavy metal band, I drink a case of beer a day, I love watching/playing all our wonderful sports and my porn collection is unrivalled... so why am I so obsessed with RPGs? Why do I prefer them over genres like FPS and racing games? Why do I love anime so much? Should I trade in my man bits? Do you at OPS think of RPGs as games more suited for the fairer sex? I need your wisdom, should I just give up on being a man? Or should I just learn to love all the 'Man Games' my mates play?  
**Yours Faithfully, Jeff**

It's the eternal question: does playing RPGs with fruity main characters make me, the player, slightly 'fruitier'? Really, in the end, only you can answer that question. We, like you, feel pretty manly, despite



the fact that Mark and Phill are constantly arguing about whether *Bleach* is better than *Naruto* (it is) and both those guys are always playing fruity games. Dr Phill (as we like to call him) has racked up 189 hours in *Final Fantasy XII*, and his girlfriend is hot (err... hi, Trish)! So, shock horror, you can be manly and love RPGs.

## SPEAK TO US

Love the new mag? Hate the new mag? We want your opinions and questions on OPS, on games – on anything that you feel the need to share with your fellow readers. The best letter of each issue wins the Game of the Month! Write to us on paper or on a computer at:

OPS Feedback  
Derwent Howard  
PO Box 1037  
Bondi Junction, NSW 1355  
ops@derwenthoward.com.au

## CUTTINGS

Delicious bite-sized letter morsels that are easy to swallow

### DAWN OF THE DEAD

Is *Dead Rising* coming on the PS3. If you get this message please send me a message ASAP!  
**Blake, via email**

*Dead Rising* will probably not make it to the PS3, *Dead Rising 2* is currently being considered, and will probably make it to the PS3 if it's ever released.

### CRISIS SOLVED (KINDA)

When is *Crisis Core* coming out? *Dirge of Cerberus* was crap. I hope this doesn't follow suit.  
**Jeff, via email**

Don't worry Jeff, Daddy's gotcha. *Crisis Core* was released on September 13 in Japan, but we'd be surprised if we see it in Oz this year. Expect it sometime in 2008.

### WONDER NO MORE...

I am wondering whether I should buy *Shadow of the Colossus*. Should I?  
**Joe Verity, via email**

The answer to your question is 'yes'.

# GHOST IN THE SHELL

攻殻機動隊

STAND ALONE COMPLEX

*Solid State Society*

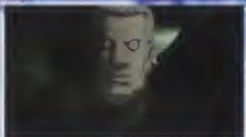
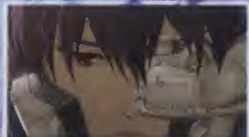
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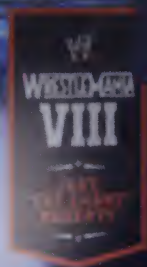
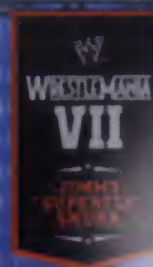
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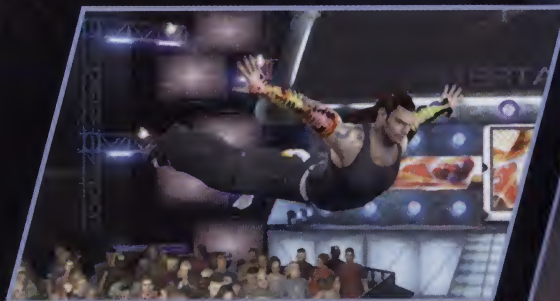
# WRESTLEMANIA



## WRESTLEMANIA 23



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# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** ACTION/ADVENTURE  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
■ **RELEASE:** NOVEMBER 2007  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT  
■ **DEVELOPER:** UBISOFT MONTREAL  
■ **WEB:** [www.assassinscreed.com](http://www.assassinscreed.com)

■ Every one of these guys has different facial features – awesome.



■ "It's really quiet up here. maybe I'll do some neck stretches" thought the 'about to die horribly' guard

■ "Altair! Give me a hug, I'm your biggest fan – ARGH!"  
Altair doesn't do autographs... hugs are punishable by death



## ASSASSIN'S CREED

Ubisoft's next big thing puts out a hit on the competition

**I**n the midst of the 12th century, the Holy Land is wracked with turmoil. At the height of the Third Crusade, the bloody battles between the combined forces of the European Crusaders and the Saracen armies are laying waste to the land, slaughtering thousands indiscriminately, with the survivors left to subsist under the miserable oppression of the occupying armies.

Enter Altair, a mysterious assassin.

Rather than opting to side with either faction, Altair instead decides to undermine the war efforts of both sides, to frustrate and nullify their strategies by eliminating the military leaders of Crusaders and Saracens alike, with the ultimate purpose of bringing the devastating hostilities to an end.

The events of *Assassin's Creed* take place in Jerusalem, incorporating several surrounding cities and the vast tracts of

harsh, rocky land in between. Considering the land that he has to cover, it's a good thing that Altair has a trusty steed and is an accomplished horseman. To get off to a quick start, Altair can vault onto his horse cowboy-style, and once mounted he can even stand in the saddle and leap from the horse mid-gallop for all kinds of equestrian acrobatics.

Once you move into the cities, the first thing you notice are the throngs







■ Steps much harder during the middle ages...

### INFO BYTE

When you're fighting a sentry on rooftops a hundred feet above the ground, you gain a real appreciation for how important position is in combat. Pro tip: give him a shove.

of crowds that inhabit the game, with dozens of people milling around at any given time. As you walk the streets of Jerusalem, you can see commoners going about their business, merchants selling their wares, preachers delivering furious sermons and even ranting madmen. Depending on the area, you will also see occupying Crusader or Saracen troops. Each character's appearance is generated from a massive pool of features that are assembled at random within certain guidelines, so despite the number of people on-screen, each one appears unique and individual.

From interacting with the inhabitants of the Holy Land, the concept of 'social stealth' comes into *Assassin's Creed*.

area. This recon mechanism forms the basis of the map system in *Assassin's Creed*, but before you can do your recon, you have to get up there.

With Altair's climbing skills, almost everything is a handhold, making even the most sheer surfaces scalable. Every niche, grille and ridge on a building can be used as a path to the rooftops. The greatest part of the climbing mechanics shows in the efforts that Ubisoft's Montreal studio has put into the architecture of *Assassin's Creed*; each building is unique – they're not just symmetrical carbon copies of each other. While Altair is a talented climber, he's not Spider-Man, so unlike other games, each edifice is its own self-contained

**"The visuals are off the chain, the animation is second to none, and the draw distance will floor you."**

In order to complete his missions, Altair doesn't necessarily need to go unseen, but only unnoticed. By blending in with the crowd and acting innocuous, like moving with the crowd or pretending to be deep in prayer (a common activity for the time), you can move through all but the most heavily guarded areas.

While these tactics work well in isolation, more often than not you need to be somewhere fast, and then the crowd becomes more of a problem and begins to get in your way. Trying to run blindly through a crowded square is a futile exercise, as you'll bump into people which will send them sprawling, slow you down and draw unnecessary attention. Gently pushing people out of the way can be one strategy to speed up the process. Another long term option is to complete side missions for the citizens which will increase your reputation with the people and in time they will willingly move out of your way and impede your enemies. Another strategy again is to leave the crowded streets and take to the rooftops.

One of the first things you want to do as soon as you enter a built-up area is to ascend to the high ground to take in the lay of the land. In each area, there is always at least one area that you can do reconnaissance from, and these can be recognised from ground level not only by their elevation, but also by the presence of eagles soaring around them. From these high perches, Altair can assess the local military presence, spy on his target and take note of other objectives in the

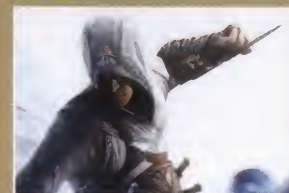
platforming puzzle.

With all of this detail involved without even delving into the core gameplay, you begin to appreciate just how deep *Assassin's Creed* is. Powered by Ubisoft's proprietary game engine, the visuals are off the chain, the animation is second to none, and the draw distance will floor you.

Let loose in a massive, realistic world with the ultimate power to make history with the stroke of a blade, it's almost hard to describe just how much we're looking forward to this title. Prospective hitmen should start sharpening their blades for a November release – *Assassin's Creed* is shaping up to be a dead cert game of the year candidate. **✚ Nick O'Shea**

### GETTING STABBY WITH IT

At first glance, the combat in *Assassin's Creed* appeared very counter-heavy, giving the impression that your foes were but lambs to the slaughter. Rest assured though, that's only one small facet of facing off against Crusader soldiers. While you can certainly, with good timing, counter enemy attacks, there are also faster light combos, slower heavy attacks for breaking through your opponent's guard and grab attacks to hurl your enemies around. What makes the combat really exciting is that the enemy soldiers have a similar moveset, so simply hesitating for a moment can really leave you on the back foot.



### WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "*Assassin's Creed* immerses you in the realistic and historical Holy Land of the 12th century, featuring life-like graphics, ambience, and the subtle, yet detailed nuances of a living world."

### WHAT WE SAY:

■ The sheer scope is nothing short of staggering. Looks set to be an utterly unmissable experience!



# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-TBA  
■ **RELEASE:** TBA 2008  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** 2K  
■ **DEVELOPER:** GEARBOX SOFTWARE  
■ **WEB:** www.gearboxsoftware.com



■ George took his gardening a little too seriously...

## BORDERLANDS

"Keep on pushin' my love... over the borderlines..."

Imagine videogame genres were living breathing human beings – what would they look like? How would they act? Well, if we had to speculate it would go a little something like this: the FPS would be a big, muscle-bound meathead who hits the gym five times a week, and strategy would be the boring, nerdy type, possibly sporting a greasy, bumfluff moustache. The racing genre would be an unspeakably handsome, slick son of a gun, pulling the ladies left right and centre, and the RPG? Well, let's face facts, the RPG would probably be the irritating emo kid huddled in the corner, whining, possibly cutting himself – so he can feel, presumably...

So yeah... is there a point to this ridiculously offensive analogy? Well, actually there is. Imagine the afore mentioned muscle-bound FPS and the weird self-harming RPG got together, had a few drinks and BICKETY BAMM, made sweet, sweet love to each other, the resulting genre 'mish mash' baby

would probably look a lot like Gearbox Software's latest creation, *Borderlands* for the PS3.

Because *Borderlands* does something so simple we find it hard to believe it hasn't been implemented before. Taking the adrenaline fuelled, steroid-induced, gameplay of the FPS, *Borderlands* adds an almost *World of Warcraft*-esque random mission structure to create a gaming experience that, quite frankly, has us extremely intrigued.

So how do these polar opposites come together to make a cohesive game? To be honest, at this point, we don't really know ourselves. The FPS elements, as far as we can tell, are at the forefront, and make up much of the core gameplay, while the RPG elements take the form of customisation, specifically with the guns featured in the game. *Borderlands* is said to feature a weapon system that allows you to actually tweak and build weapons yourself, allowing for literally thousands of different combinations.

Gearbox software has also promised that *Borderlands* will produce a unique gameplay experience for each user, with randomly generated missions and enemies. Players can approach these missions alone, or as a group of four players in a co-operative mode, each of whom are free to drop in and out at all times during the game. As of now we have few details as to how this mechanic will work, but the promise of this sporadic content could make for an endlessly entertaining single-player campaign, in direct opposition to the typically linear

experience seen in the FPS genre.

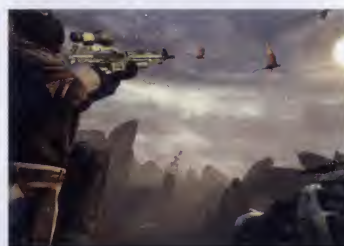
We applaud Gearbox software for tinkering with one of the most rigid genres in videogaming, but with the little info we have it's difficult to make any assumptions as to the possible success of this experimentation. With only a handful of (admittedly) gorgeous screens and a smidgeon of info available to us, it's impossible at this stage to make any judgement on the game whatsoever. We can't wait to find out more regarding this curious hybrid shooter, however. Stay tuned. **Mark Serrels**

### WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "...blends first-person action with character progression and hundreds of thousands of weapons for an unmatched co-operative gaming experience."

### WHAT WE SAY:

■ Interesting concept that attempts to push the boundaries of the FPS genre.



### INFO BYTE

*Borderlands* is the latest in a glut of games to use the somehow arousing Unreal 3 engine, which means, in short, it will look awesome.

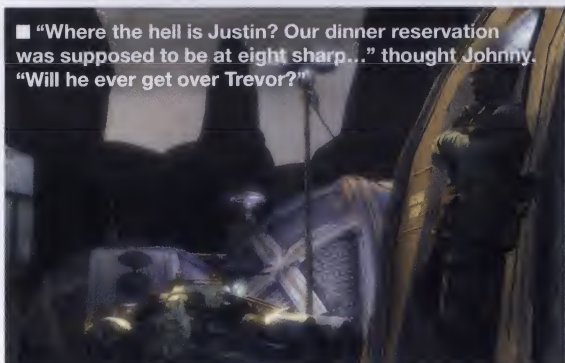


### IT'S UM... AN ELEPHANT...

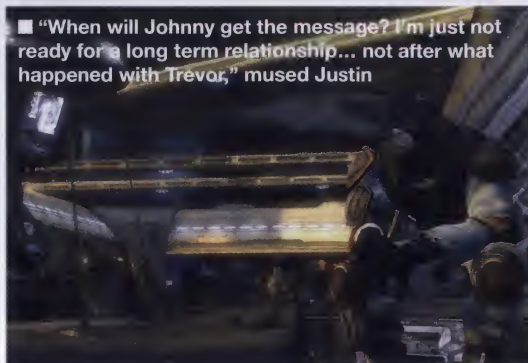
... with a vagina for a face? What the hell! Maybe our heads are in the gutter, but the first thought that came to mind when we first locked eyes with this screenshot was the fact that this ponderous, prodigious beast, which looks awesome by the way, has a set of upside-down genitalia where its mouth should be. It's not that we're complaining; we love the idea. At least now we know where to aim the rocket launcher – that's got to be his/her weak spot.



■ "Where the hell is Justin? Our dinner reservation was supposed to be at eight sharp..." thought Johnny. "Will he ever get over Trevor?"



■ "When will Johnny get the message? I'm just not ready for a long term relationship... not after what happened with Trevor," mused Justin

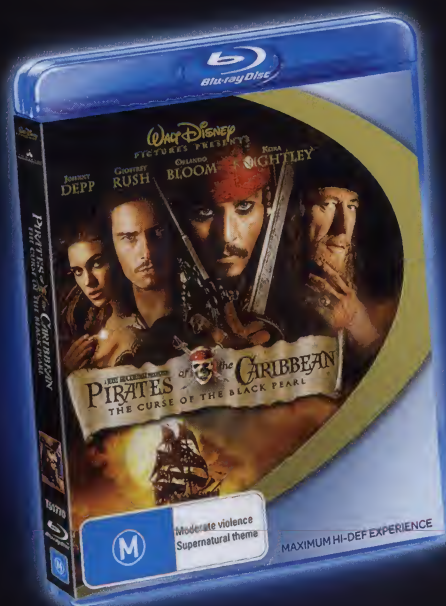




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PLAYSTATION 3



# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** ACTION  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-TBA  
■ **RELEASE:** TBA 2008  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** VIVENDI  
■ **DEVELOPER:** A2M  
■ **WEB:** www.a2m.com



■ **Guys in skin tight vests: they must die, each and every one of them...**

## INFO BYTE

Rubi also makes use of an enormous samurai sword, dealing sharpish death to those who would dare wear bulletproof vests.

# WET

Keeping gamers moist

Come on Sierra, what the hell... seriously. You develop a game with a hot chick – fair enough, we can deal with that – you endow her with an enormous pair of sweater puppets – no problems here – but then you have to go ahead and give the game a name like *WET*?! You've got to be kidding! It's already hard enough to keep our filthy minds in check at the best of times, but this is ridiculous. How the hell do we restrain ourselves from the slew of double entendres that are now popping into our head sporadically? Self control? Don't be silly, we don't possess anything like that.

A heavily stylised action game, *WET* follows in the well-worn traditions of directors such as Quentin Tarantino and John Woo, featuring the kind of bullet set pieces that would make Max Payne lose his breath. The extra hook, however, is that while main character Rubi can shoot with the best of them, she can also partake in some stellar acrobatics. In short, she's Jackie Chan with jubbles.

Protagonist Rubi is a bit of a

character, a tough cookie who partakes in pretty much any activity, legal or not, for a quick buck. Working for the government, the mob – nothing is out of bounds for this feisty young Philly. In fact the name *WET* is apparently derived from the term 'wetwork', which is used in intelligence circles to describe secret 'black ops'. We're guessing that you may be partaking in such missions at one point in the game.

What we've seen of this game so far is stylin' beyond belief. The bog standard dual wielding pistols make a predictable appearance, but with a welcome twist: Rubi has the ability to dual aim said pistols, resulting in some spectacular action. One scene, for example, had Rubi poppin' caps in the asses of two bad guys on either side of her – whilst in the throes of an awesome slo-mo slide. Radical. Another set piece showed her sliding down a ladder, upside down, with accompanying boobage on display, all the while firing off multiple rounds at the bad guys.

As of now *WET* is undoubtedly one of

the most ambitious titles in development. We have no earthly idea how A2M is going to design a dual wielding aim mechanic, but we're curious to find out; combining this aiming system with the insane acrobatic trickery Rubi frequently indulges in seems like a monumental challenge. We hope the team is up to the task; if A2M can make these moves a playable reality, we could be onto something special. We're positively moist with anticipation. **Mark Serrels**



## WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "Rubi takes the title as the most exciting heroine ever in videogames."

## WHAT WE SAY:

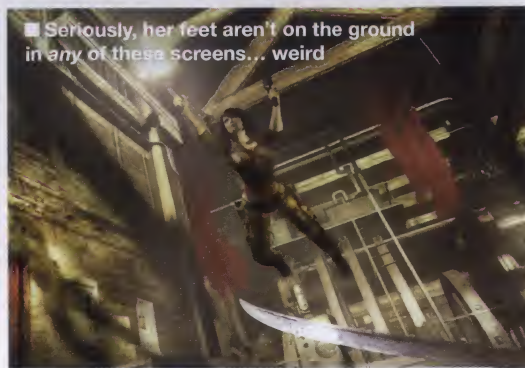
■ We can't wait to... *WET* our appetites with this one. Oh, we know it's 'whet'. Give us a break: it's a half decent pun!



■ **Crates, slo-mo, jumping, dual wielding guns: could they fit any more clichés into this screenshots?**



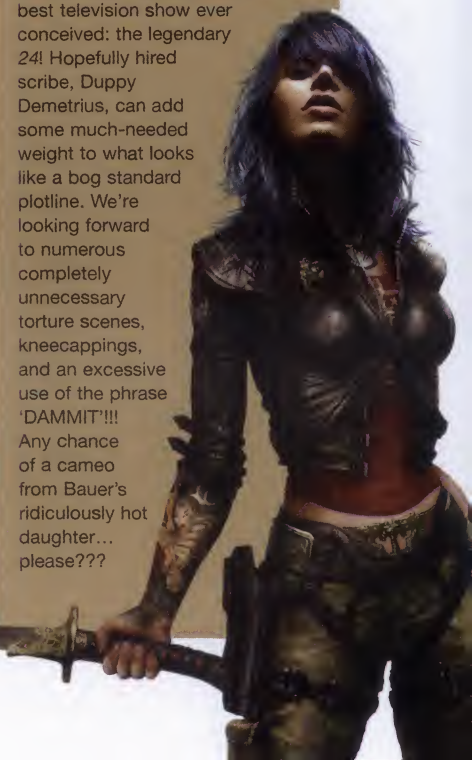
■ **Rubi: she likes to jump... a lot**



■ **Seriously, her feet aren't on the ground in any of these screens... weird**

## PREVIOUSLY ON WET...

While on the surface *WET*'s storyline seems a bit bland and generic (based on the scant details at hand) we still have hope. Why? Well it's only being written by the man responsible for the best television show ever conceived: the legendary 24! Hopefully hired scribe, Duppy Demetrius, can add some much-needed weight to what looks like a bog standard plotline. We're looking forward to numerous completely unnecessary torture scenes, kneecappings, and an excessive use of the phrase 'DAMMIT!!!' Any chance of a cameo from Bauer's ridiculously hot daughter... please???







## PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-16  
■ **RELEASE:** EARLY 2008  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** FUNTASTIC  
■ **DEVELOPER:** PROPAGANDA  
■ **WEB:** [propagandagames.go.com](http://propagandagames.go.com)

■ Missing from that range: unforgiveable



■ There's nothing 'mini' about this minigun

■ Holy stromboli, that is a genuine, trouser filling, big ass T-rex

# TUROK

Tu-ROCKS! (groan...)

Before *GoldenEye* showed the gaming world that the first-person shooter could work like a charm on console formats, before *Half-Life* convinced us that we could do something more than simply blow the crap out of everything that moved, before the FPS genre was completely turned on its heels by those two seminal milestones of gaming excellence we had the awesome *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*, a game that pushed the fledgling N64 hardware to the limit and out-played its predecessors with scintillating graphics. Upon its release *Turok* was nothing short of groundbreaking – plus it had dinosaurs... that you could shoot and kill!

But despite the relative success of the game, *Turok* seemed to get lost in the fervour for the sublime *GoldenEye*, and the fact that the next two games

in the franchise were completely solid did nothing to halt *Turok's* slow slip into obscurity. Sadly, the release of the infinitely mediocre *Turok Evolution* on the PS2, a dire reimagining of the *Turok* series, was the final nail in the coffin for a once grand videogame franchise (and Acclaim, but that's a different story).

But like a terrifying Pterodactyl-shaped phoenix, a new flashy next gen reboot of the *Turok* series has emerged from the flames, attempting to do what the original game did way back in 1997: melt eyeballs with its groundbreaking jungle environments, scare children with its intensely realistic dinosaurs, and redefine FPS parameters with its insanely destructive weaponry.

At the moment, as far as we've seen, *Turok* has already achieved two of these three lofty goals, and as a greasy overweight Meatloaf once said, two out of three ain't bad.

To start with, *Turok's* dense jungle setting is looking absolutely fantastic; there's a definite realism on display as Turok powers his way through the foliage. The grass sways realistically in the wind and, even more impressively, the blades get physically trodden underfoot as you manoeuvre through the environment. There's a real interactivity about your surroundings that is spookily immersive.

But *Turok* cranks the whole thing up a notch with its portrayal of those pesky prehistoric monstrosities we

call dinosaurs. Whereas in previous *Turok* games we were content to fire some well-aimed arrows into the guts of Velociraptors and be done with it, this time round we have more options. One trick we saw involved Turok shooting the eggs of a medium sized dinosaur provoking the mother into an uncontrollable rage. This chain reaction resulted in the Velociraptor chasing after, and subsequently chowing down on, two of our human enemies.

An interesting game dynamic to be sure, but on the third count, the awe inspiring weapons were severely lacking at this stage. That doesn't mean they don't exist, it's just that we haven't seen them yet. But we at OPS, we're men of faith, and considering the fact that this version of *Turok* has been faithful to all other aspects of the franchise, we believe that it's just a matter of time before we see the infinitely destructive weaponry we're lusting after. Watch this space for more details. **Mark Serrels**

### WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "Turok is an epic, story-driven first-person shooter set on a dark, mysterious planet in the future."

### WHAT WE SAY:

■ Duing it out with the most detailed big-ass T-rex ever seen on consoles? Count us in.

### INFO BYTE

This new version of *Turok* is actually a complete reboot. It will not be continuing any storylines from the previous games.

### OH, AND ONE MORE THING...

...did we forget to mention the INSANELY HUGE! TERRIFYINGLY REALISTICALLY MOVINGLY WTFBQROFLMFAO TYRANNOSAURUS REX?!?!?! (deep breath...) Yes, that's right, there is a freakishly huge T-rex featured in *Turok*, appearing for just a couple of seconds at the end of the most recent trailer (which is available on the PlayStation Store). Although this is far from a first in the world of gaming – both the original *Turok 2* and *Tomb Raider* featured a T-rex – we have never seen anything as scarily detailed as this. We look forward to somehow attempting to take this mammoth legend of prehistory down with some insanely destructive hand cannon.





# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** ACTION  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
■ **RELEASE:** TBA  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** 2K  
■ **DEVELOPER:** ILLUSION SOFTWAREWORKS  
■ **WEB:** www.mafia2game.com



■ "Waaa... stop shooting at me, see? You'll never get me alive copper... waaaah..."

## MAFIA 2

More Italian game characters who stomp on heads...

If all goes to plan you'll be pining for *Mafia 2* on its release; perhaps even yearning. While many games predict that to be the case amidst their whirlwind of foreplay hype, *Mafia 2*'s call is entitled to some credibility based on the reality that, well, *Mafia*, was the first and arguably best gangster game in the history of the universe.

While there hasn't been as much information released on *Mafia 2* as we'd like, we have been privy to a slick trailer shown at the recent Leipzig Games Convention and for all intents and purposes it looks as though it will be an eye-bulging evolution of the first game, which stormed the charts five years ago with its peerless mash of third-person Tommy-gunning and open city driving. For those who haven't played it, think of it as a more varied and dynamic version of EA's *The Godfather*. Except without a pre-

morbidly obese Marlon Brando.

But so what? A quick flick through the adjacent pages of this preview section should prove that gamers will be spoiled for choice by a gamut of top titles in the upcoming months. Leaning on old tricks won't help *Mafia 2* compete. But don't go against "the family" just yet. The team at Illusion Softworks know the bar of quality has been raised on consoles and is gunning for a grand objective.

Forget leaving *The Godfather* or *Donnie Brasco* on loop in your lounge room, *Mafia 2* is out to up the cinematic standard of action games for all time. While that sounds numbingly cliché, it's all about increasing the game's credibility to the point that you, the player, will actually feel emotionally involved with the characters and story. Developer Illusion Softworks hopes to make this happen through creating one of the most

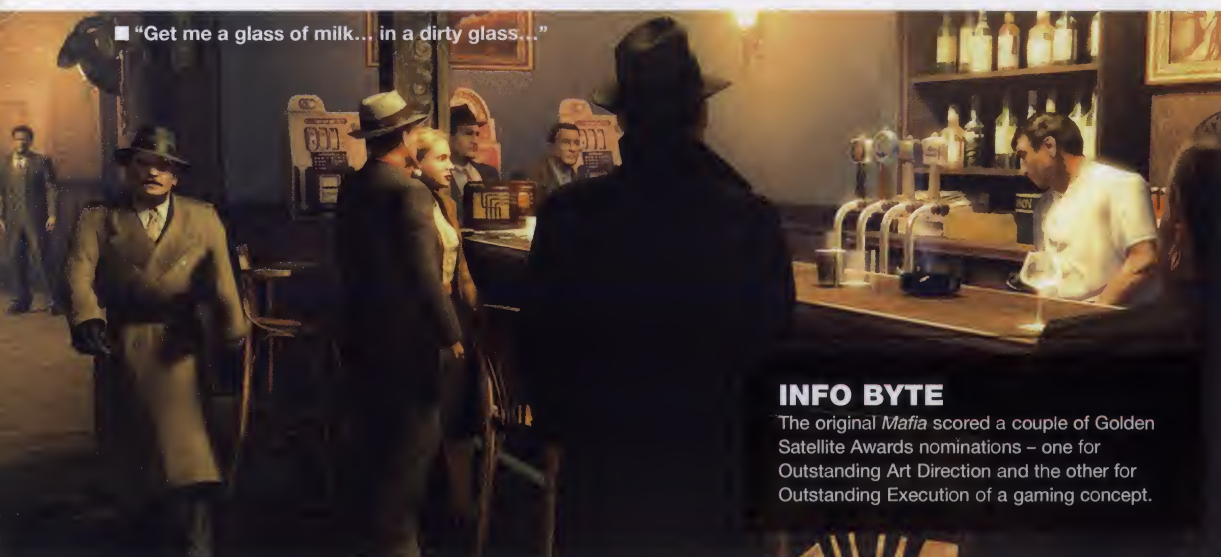
realistic game worlds drawn. Characters' brows will dip and rise with curiosity, paranoid eyes will dart, and edgy men will shift about in their seats. On top of that, expect a huge *GTA*-type environment to dominate, full of bustling dames and vintage wheels.

And lots of shooting.

Unlike *GTA*, which has traditionally been the jack of all trades yet master of none, *Mafia 2* will likely focus all its kinetic energy on those little bitty nuggets of lead that go rocketing about the place. One scene we witnessed saw our main lad embroiled in a fire fight from a moving car, the carnage looking every bit as intense as a celluloid fiasco.



We haven't seen much, but what we have seen has phoned in foaming wads of piping hot drool down our fronts. It looks stunning, and it looks vast. If Illusion Softworks blows it from here we'll be sending them a severed horse's head. **James Ellis**



■ "Get me a glass of milk... in a dirty glass..."

### INFO BYTE

The original *Mafia* scored a couple of Golden Satellite Awards nominations – one for Outstanding Art Direction and the other for Outstanding Execution of a gaming concept.

### WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "The 'wow' factor of *Mafia 2* is definitely the benchmark-setting visual quality and action that you expect to see only in Hollywood movies."

### WHAT WE SAY:

■ *Mafia 2* has oodles of potential – we'll be keeping an eye on these goodfellas.

### SPANK THE '40s FUZZ

Is this a cliché or what? Police chasing you down? If this was a real mafia game wouldn't it be a simple case of flashing the family eyebrow and going on your merry way, blood dripping out of your boot and all? Whatever this screen indicates, we're hoping that like *The Godfather*, *Mafia 2* will allow you to indulge in all sorts of mischief including police extortion, smuggling booze, and whacking the heck out of all those low-down cock-a-roaches. (Yes – we know that's from *Scarface*, but who gets tired of saying cock-a-roaches?)





# the sesame seeds



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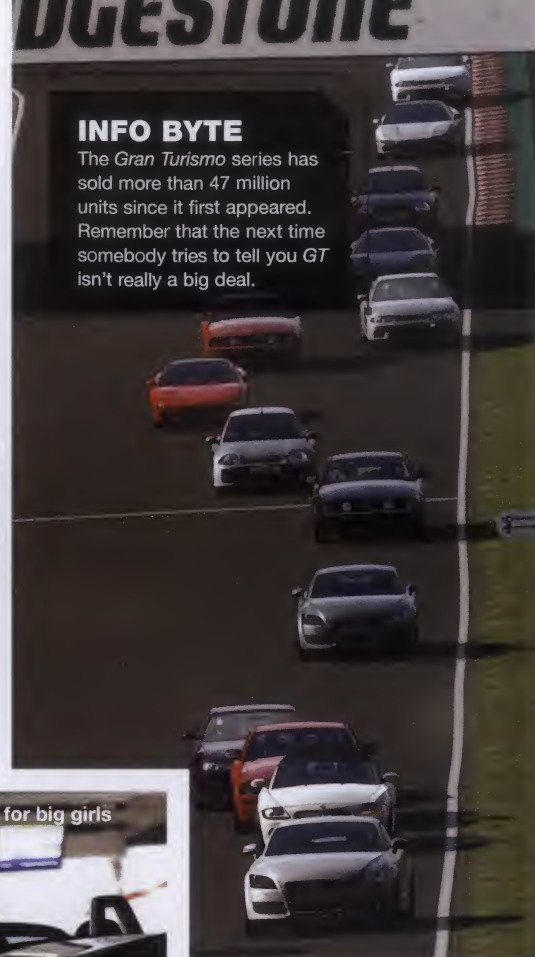
Available after 10:30am





# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** RACING  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-16  
■ **RELEASE:** OCTOBER 2007  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** SONY  
■ **DEVELOPER:** POLYPHONY DIGITAL  
■ **WEB:** www.gran-turismo.com



## INFO BYTE

The *Gran Turismo* series has sold more than 47 million units since it first appeared. Remember that the next time somebody tries to tell you GT isn't really a big deal.



■ Driving gloves: manly

1'38.333



■ Why is this guy wearing a helmet? All he's doing is putting on a wheel for goodness sake!



■ We still maintain that soft tops are for big girls

## WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "...there's enough ultra-realistic, high-speed racing in *Gran Turismo 5 Prologue* on PS3 to keep your accelerator firmly to the floor for the rest of the year."

## WHAT WE SAY:

■ It's *Gran Turismo*. It's great. Period.

## BATTLE OF THE SEXES

It's a debate that has raged for years – are women poorer drivers than men? The statistics say no. More men die on the roads, more men speed and more men drink and drive. The statistics, however, don't show who is more likely to back their Prado into you in a car park while talking on the phone – a man or a woman? They also don't show who is more likely to reverse into a log they couldn't see through the frangipani stickers covering their rear window – a man or a woman? They also don't show who is more likely to win an F1 World Championship – a man or a woman? Oooooohh...



# GRAN TURISMO 5 PROLOGUE

The king of the road is coming...

One of the best bits of news to emerge from this year's Leipzig games convention in Germany was an announcement from GT-creator and Polyphony Digital big cheese Kazunori Yamauchi that the upcoming teaser for *Gran Turismo 5*, *Gran Turismo 5 Prologue*, will be available free, that's right – free, from the PlayStation Network before the end of this year.

Men, as you may know, are generally programmed to love cars – so one glimpse of *Prologue* is likely to cause some severe trouser stiffening. Running at a buttery 60fps and at eyeball-nuking 1080p, *Prologue* will very likely feature the most remarkable and most photo-realistic rides to ever grace a game.

*Prologue* will pack-in over 40 cars, including models from Ferrari, Dodge, Lotus, Mitsubishi and more, plus a handful of tracks (Suzuka, the Eiger Nordwand seen in *Gran Turismo HD* and a London

city track were named specifically). Also boasting vastly improved and potentially pant-staining handling physics, *Prologue* will be a marked step up from the somewhat limited *Gran Turismo HD*.

*Prologue* will see the debut of fully detailed and meticulously modelled interiors for all cars, which will give players a brand-new cabin view – something fans have been requesting for years and something the Xbox 360's answer to GT, *Forza Motorsport 2*, was severely criticised for lacking.

Offline, it's been reported the game is completely different from *Gran Turismo 4 Prologue*. As opposed to being a series of licence tests it will be more of a classic *Gran Turismo* experience – racing for cars, cash and trophies.

Online, and that's a first for the series despite earlier promises of a GT4 online mode, *Prologue* will support up to 16 players head-to-head and will feature

Global Online Rankings for the ultimate in geek bragging rights.

There'll also be an online dealership and 'Gran Turismo TV' – a dedicated online channel exclusive to PSN featuring stacks of motorsport content, and possibly the chance to watch others race.

Perhaps most excitingly, however, is the prospect of real-time cosmetic damage being featured. When quizzed, Yamauchi explained that a damage model is currently being worked on and tied to the AI. The AI is set to receive a drastic overhaul, which is good news considering the increased amount of cars on track would mean the stoic and sometimes daft drivers of yore would most probably become an incredible frustration.

The full, unabridged *Gran Turismo 5* is due in 2008 – but *Prologue* should prove to be a suitably satisfying entree.

Who says there's no such thing as a free lunch? **— Luke Reilly**



# \* skate.



**E**A's *SKATE*, is the real deal, the closest you can get to playing like a pro without strapping on some kneepads and putting in 10 years of practise. Just ask John Rattray, one of the many high profile professional skaters featured in *SKATE*. "The game's pretty realistic," claims John, "I do the same things you do in the game; skate around, practise tricks, look for spots, record some footage".

But that's not all, utilising a unique control system, *SKATE* uses the control pad to try and mimic the movements real pros make in order to perform tricks. A simple ollie, for example, requires a simple up and down movement, whereas a kickflip requires a quick flick down then up to the left, reflecting the motions of the trick itself. It's undoubtedly the most realistic and in depth skating game on the market, featuring endless

customisation options that allow you to create your own skater, and you own style of skating. *SKATE* really lets you get deep into the skating experience and develop your own story as a professional, with an open ended, free flowing game world that lets you go where you want, when you want, bringing the sandbox to skating. *SKATE* is a must, for skaters and non-skaters alike. Check it out for the consummate skating experience.





# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** RACING  
■ **PLAYERS:** TBC  
■ **RELEASE:** EARLY 2008  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ROCKSTAR  
■ **DEVELOPER:** ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO  
■ **WEB:** www.rockstargames.com



■ He's like that 'Cool Rider' guy from *Grease 2*. Err, apparently



## INFO BYTE

Basing the game around LA might seem like a step back from the previous title but this city is actually larger than all three of *MC3*'s cities put together. Chew on that.

■ What's the time? If you answered 'midnight' you're incorrect. The correct answer is always 'Hammertime'

## MIDNIGHT CLUB: LOS ANGELES

Should you join the club?

**E**ver since the racing genre rolled out of the garage there have been two distinct clubs of motoring enthusiasts. On one side of the road you've got your serious simulation and authenticity nuts and on the other you've got your arcade junkies. Rather than picking a side, *Midnight Club: Los Angeles* aims to keep both clubs hooked by overdosing the arcade junkies on speed and carnage, while revving the

sim fans' engines with a huge range of painstakingly detailed replicas of motoring's meanest machines.

As the buildings and traffic bleed past in a blur of headlights and neon it's impossible not to be impressed by the sheer speed of *Midnight Club*. THEN they hit the nitrous! Remember that scene from *Men in Black* where two jet engines came out of the boot and the car rocketed along the roof of the tunnel?



■ Big car = small penis. It's simple science





■ No-one thinks 'big' of you (makes little pinky sign)

Hitting nitro in *Midnight Club* delivers the same impact. The camera shifts back, the car screams down the road and a sonic boom shatters all the windows on the street. Okay we lied, so the sonic boom only shattered our pathetic little eardrums, but come on Rockstar, tell us the window idea is *not* money.

Hurting along at these speeds feels amazing when you're in the zone, zipping through cross traffic and using stairs to fly across freeway overpasses (cue cinematic camera view). It's a dangerous thrill though, as we saw demonstrated many times when an oncoming car would zig instead of zagging, sending your car into a cartwheeling explosion of torn panels and shattered glass.

LA's wide boulevards ensure lengthy drifts around corners are a large part of *Midnight Club's* street racing. For these drifts Rockstar employs some clever camera work to turn each one into a cool event. Rather than remaining locked to the back of the car, the camera shifts down low and gets on the inside of the corner, making it feel more like a Hollywood chase than a videogame.

As well as successfully amping up the street racing Rockstar has bolted on a few other tweaks to streamline the experience. Menu screens clearly weren't fast or cool enough for Rockstar to bother with as the hub for *Midnight Club's* Career mode. In the game's default Cruise mode you simply roll up next to an opponent and flash your lights to challenge them to a race. In a split-second the game maps out a route to the starting line and you and your rival compete to get there. The first one to the line nabs extra respect points, far more of which are up for grabs in the actual race event.

Without loading and menu screens to get bogged down in, setting up another race is never more than a few seconds away. After races you can either pull into the nearest servo and drop some cash on a "Quick Fix" to return your car to pristine condition or you can just flash the next opponent and start racing. A handy satellite view of LA can also be pulled up at any time so you can choose locations

to zap to if there's not an opponent near enough for your liking.

With both *Need for Speed ProStreet* and *Juiced 2* adapting their titles to the car enthusiasts' focus-shift from illegal street racing to track-based gatherings, *Midnight Club: LA* could be seen to be lagging behind. It's important to remember though, that the *Midnight Club* franchise was around well before the *Fast* and the *Furious* fad and we suspect there's still a good deal of gas left in the tank of this bad boy racer. Be sure to join this club in 2008. **▬ Narayan Pattison**

#### WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "With *Midnight Club: Los Angeles*, Rockstar San Diego looks to once again push the boundaries and expectations of what a racing game can be."

#### WHAT WE SAY:

■ It probably won't redefine the genre but it will serve up a solid slab of super speedy street racing.

#### INTERIOR DESIGNERS

This may look like one of the duller racing screens you've ever seen but it's actually a good example of just how far Rockstar has gone to recreate its cars in minute detail. As well as the game's new in-car racing view, the designers have set aside plenty of the 100,000 polygons per car to be used to model the interiors all the way down to fully functioning dials and gauges.



ALL BETS ARE OFF



## MILLA JOVOVICH RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION

SCREENPLAY BY DAVID GINSBURG / PRODUCED BY CONSTANTINE FILMS / DAVID GINSBURG / IMPACT PICTURES / PRESENTS MILLA JOVOVICH "RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION" CHRISTOPHER YOUNG SPENCER LOCKE WITH JASON MAMMA AND JESSICA HARTNADT STYLING JOSEPH PIERRO COSTUME DESIGNER EDUARDO CABALLERO EDITOR ROYCE BOWEN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MARV K. ONE PRODUCED BY BENJAMIN BEARD AND EVAN JACOBSON DIRECTED BY DAVID JOHNSON CAST BY PATRICK TATOPHOLIS MUSIC BY CHARLIE CLOUSIER EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS "RESIDENT EVIL" JAMES MATHIAS PRODUCED BY VICTOR BARBOSA KELLY VAN HOON PRODUCED BY BERND ECKHARDT SAMUEL BARBOSA ROBERT KILZER JEREMY BOTT PAUL W.S. ANDERSON WRITTEN BY PAUL W.S. ANDERSON DIRECTED BY RUSSELL MALLORY

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**OCTOBER 11**



# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** SPORTS  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-7  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA  
■ **DEVELOPER:** EA CANADA  
■ **WEB:** WWW.EA.COM

## FIFA 08

GOOOOOOOOOOOOOOAAALLLLLLLLL...

**P**oor FIFA. Throughout soccer videogame history, you've always been one step behind. You've got the money, the power, possibly even the ladies, but you've never had the respect. Like the David Beckham to *Pro Evo*'s Zidane, FIFA has, unfairly, never been seen as a true world class competitor on the sports circuit. Sure it looks pretty, and has the highest profile of any soccer game on the market, but true purists have always returned to *Pro Evo*, seen universally by fans as the most sophisticated soccer sim on the market.

But like David Beckham, this lack of respect has always been unjust, fuelled more by snobby, elitist attitudes than actual objective judgement. No one wants to be a fan of something that pretty – especially booed up, testosterone fuelled sports fans – and sadly this has rendered FIFA a consistent second best. This time round, however, as the *Pro Evo* franchise looks set to rest on the laurels of past successes, EA is determined to silence the critics with a title that combines the superior presentation of FIFA with the in-depth simulation aspects displayed by its illustrious competition.

One of the major ways EA intends to achieve this goal is through the new skills system, which allows you to use the right analogue stick to perform all the crazy tricks Ronaldinho and Rooney regularly confuse their opposition with. For example, Ronnie's gravity defying flip flap, and C. Ronaldo's flamboyant step overs are all utilised via these controls, giving the player a true feeling of interaction, as opposed to the usual sterile button presses we are used to.

But it's in the new 'Be a Pro' mode that EA is really attempting to push the boundaries of the traditional soccer game mechanics to the next level. Via this mode, gamers can choose to play as one player for the entirety of a match, meaning that instead of constantly being in control of the ball, it is essential that you become familiar with other aspects of soccer, such as man marking, positioning, and off the ball marking. A fantastic dynamic camera zooms in behind the player when he's in control of the ball, and zooms out for off-the-ball shenanigans – such as man marking.

As producer Andrew Wilson explained, it's all part of EA's ambitious goal of eventually hosting 11 v 11 matches online, with human players combining to play an intelligently played game of soccer. It's a lofty dream (who the hell wants to play as a full back or a goal keeper?) but EA is attempting to use the 'Be a Pro' mode to teach gamers to play a single position for an entire match, in preparation for these types of games in future iterations of the game. Ultimately FIFA 08 is the testing ground for such a game mode. Look for our final verdict in the next issue. **Mark Serrels**

### WHAT THEY SAY:

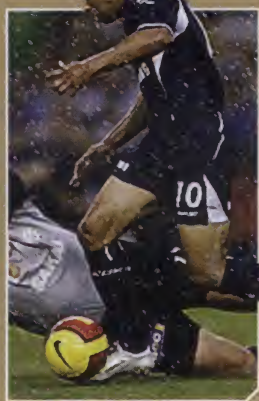
■ "FIFA 08 will create a football experience that matches the complexity, finesse and beauty of the real-world game."

### WHAT WE SAY:

■ An ambitious change of direction for the world's most popular soccer sim.

### ARCHIE'S ARMY

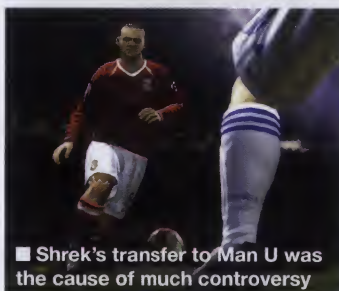
We had a chance to talk to Melbourne Victory legend, and A-League representative, Archie Thompson regarding his role in the FIFA 08. "I've played the game a good bit" claimed Archie. "They initially made me a bit pale looking, so I made them give me a better tan". Archie also revealed that plenty of the Socceroos are big gamers: "At first the PlayStation was in the common room, and we rarely played it, but me and Jason Culina sneaked it into our room, and before long everyone was crowded round the TV trying to beat each other". With the inclusion of the A-League into the FIFA franchise, we're sure more of the Socceroos will be getting stuck into the game this time round.



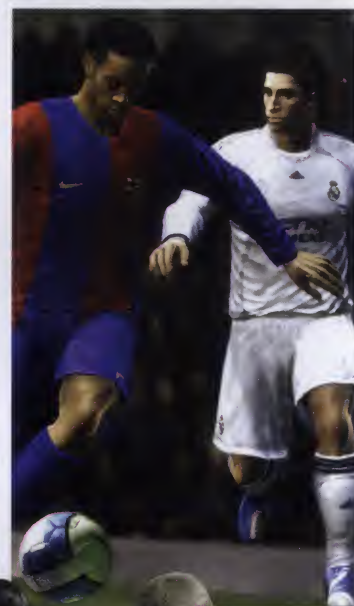
■ "Wheee man, what happened to your hair?"

### INFO BYTE

This time around the ubiquitous Andy Gray returns on commentary, partnered by Martin Tyler for the PS3, but Clive Tyldesley on PS2. Why are they different? We have no earthly idea...



■ Shrek's transfer to Man U was the cause of much controversy



■ Keep your eye on the balls...





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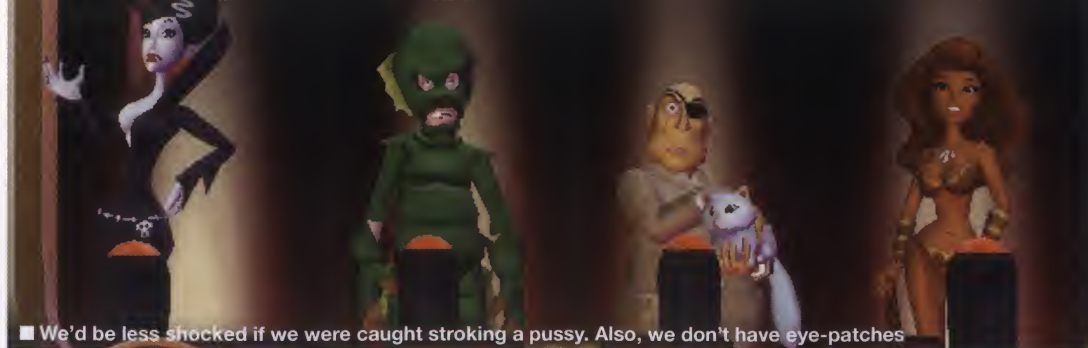


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# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** PARTY  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-8  
■ **RELEASE:** OCTOBER 2007  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** SONY  
■ **DEVELOPER:** SONY  
■ **WEB:** www.sony.com.au



## BUZZ! THE HOLLYWOOD

Buzz off...

Let's face it, gaming can be a great way to show your mates how much better you are than them. Honestly, tell us you don't feel strangely superior when you nudge them off track in a race, bruise them solidly in a beat 'em up?

The *Buzz!* series of quiz games can be more fun than a trivia night at your local pub, and without the annoying smell of vomit, too. Which is handy.

*Buzz! The Hollywood Quiz* isn't exactly the most cryptically titled game around. This time round it's all about Tinseltown. It is surprising it's taken so long for *Buzz!* to go to the movies, especially considering just how much inane film trivia people have stored in their heads these days.

As always with the *Buzz!* games, *Buzz! The Hollywood Quiz* will really take off with a group of friends. Again, up to

eight players will be supported on two sets of buzzers.

Anyone who has played the DVD game *Scene It* will know what to expect here and, to be honest, *Buzz! The Hollywood Quiz* has the definite potential to be the best *Buzz!* yet. Movies are infinitely more interesting than, say, golf – so *The Hollywood Quiz* really ought to trounce *The Sports Quiz*.

*The Hollywood Quiz* is set to boast over 5000 questions and truckloads of movie clips. Our only concern is the quality and range of the movie goodness (what studios have granted permission to use material?) and whether it'll be entirely US-centric. They do, for instance, make films in Europe, Asia and Australia, you know. Hell, even the Kiwis make 'em (yes, we saw *Footrot Flats*...) **Chris Dzelde**



### WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "Buzz in with your Buzz! Buzzer USB controllers, slamming the answer faster than your friends."

### WHAT WE SAY:

■ Right... will do. Can you say the word Buzz any more in one breath? You sound like a broken Buzz Lightyear.



# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** RACING  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
■ **RELEASE:** NOVEMBER 2007  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA  
■ **DEVELOPER:** EA BLACK BOX  
■ **WEB:** www.needforspeed.com



## NFS PROSTREET

Taking it off the street...

The *Need for Speed* series of games has captured the street racing genre over the years and has managed to become more than just another line of dialogue from the movie *Top Gun*. The latest incarnation of the franchise has aroused interest here in Australia with former Big Brother Krystal Forscutt fronting the game. And let's face it, when it comes to fronting, she's pretty much got it covered.

We've just got wind of a new mini-game that'll pre-empt each race for you to warm up your tyres. A green bar around your tacho will help you gauge how much to smoke your tyres for the right amount of heat for a perfect start.

We're also happy to report that EA Black Box has overhauled the drifting model, which we really weren't all that

keen on in *Carbon*. In *ProStreet* cars will feel much heavier and even more powerful and give you better feedback as they skew sideways around the track. The result is a drifting model that feels far more satisfying and more intuitive than before (*Carbon* felt like you were skating over a frozen pond).

We'd like to say EA bringing *ProStreet* to PS2 is a show of faith to PS2 owners that they're not being left out in the cold, although we dare say it's probably got a lot more to do with the fact there's still around 120 million of you out there. Maybe it's a bit of both.

It's not going to pack the same punch as its PS3 older brother, but as we approach the PS2's eight year developers certainly know how to squeeze every single drop of juice from it. **Chris Dzelde**



### WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "Need for Speed ProStreet accelerates street racing culture by providing the ultimate stage for the pursuit of street racing supremacy."

### WHAT WE SAY:

■ Okay. Good. But can it really do justice to Krystal's curves?







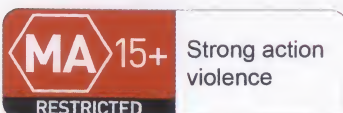
*"One of the most exciting  
upcoming releases for the PS3."*  
Official PlayStation Magazine

*"It's shaping up to be an  
unashamedly violent and  
heart-stopping experience  
from first clip emptied to the  
last shot fired."*

Official Xbox 360 Magazine

# JOHN WOO PRESENTS STRANGLEHOLD

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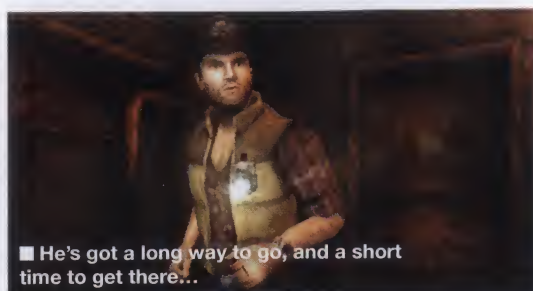


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# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

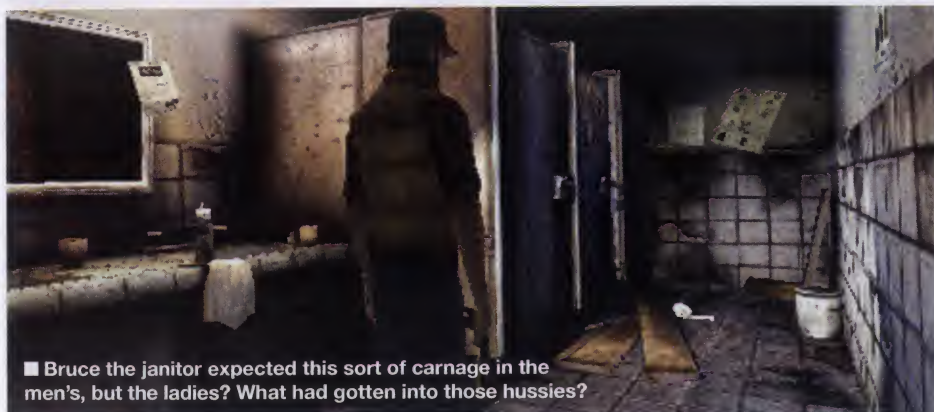
■ **GENRE:** SURVIVAL HORROR  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
■ **RELEASE:** OCTOBER 2007  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ATARI  
■ **DEVELOPER:** CLIMAX STUDIOS  
■ **WEB:** [silenthillorigins.com](http://silenthillorigins.com)



■ He's got a long way to go, and a short time to get there...



■ "Oh..."



■ Bruce the janitor expected this sort of carnage in the men's, but the ladies? What had gotten into those hussies?



## SILENT HILL: ORIGINS

"There's something evil in your pocket.  
No, not THAT – the game!"

**R**esident Evil – even the newer entries like part four – always serve a fair portion of action with the horror. Potential tension is often subverted by the fact you have a machine gun and a handful of grenades.

That's not to say we don't love *Resident Evil*, we do, it's just as survival horror titles go, the *Hill* always leaned more towards the eerie side of horror.

Following on from part four (*Silent Hill: The Room* – which was very underrated) on PS2, the evil has now spread to the PSP. But rather than continue the utterly confusing narrative, *Silent Hill: Origins* has done an old comic book trick and taken us back to where it all began.

We had an all-too-brief play with *Origins*, but what we saw was pretty damn impressive to say the least.

You're a truck driver who spies a house on fire with a little girl inside. Heroically you dash in and pick up her crispy, lightly blackened form, taking it outside. Then things get weird. You wake up in an abandoned hospital. It's creepy... and silent-ish. Then you go into a room where the little girl (sans third degree burns) leaves a bloody handprint on the glass between you. Press on the mirror and suddenly you'll find yourself in hell.

And what's in hell, class? That's right – demons. First up you face a bunch of faceless, twitching nurses. This was a little disappointing, to be honest, as we've done nurses in previous entries. Not to mention the movie. Surely something new and creepy should get a go.

Anyway, after bashing their heads in with a hammer, pot plants, small tellies

or blasting with the gun's very limited ammo – you'll soon see that you can zip in and out of hell by using a mirror. Any mirror. This helps with the puzzles and the like because whereas a corridor may be blocked off in the real world, in bizarro monster land it can be clear – and vice-versa. Interesting game mechanic...

The demo ended with us walking into a room where another monster jumped from the ceiling. This one was tough – and it took a few goes to decorate the room with its brain pus. Meanwhile it appeared to be humping us – and not in a good way.

It's a little early to announce this as the big PSP horror game, but we're hard pressed to think of one that's going to stop it at this point.

The fog has returned, the creepy noises, the sirens and the perpetually bewildered hero all feature.

We really, really can't wait to see the finished product – and while we're on the topic why isn't there a PSP *Resident Evil*?

Anyway, expect a nice big review of *Origins* really soon. It should tide us over until *Silent Hill V* comes out for the PS3.

✚ Anthony O'Connor

### WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "With all new monsters, characters and details this will help unlock some of the mysteries of the other *Silent Hill* games."

### WHAT WE SAY:

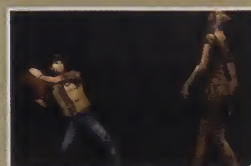
■ Easily the most awesomely disgusting game on the PSP to date.



■ Sam had 'scooped' his fair share of dog poop, but this one took the biscuit. That must have been one big dog...



### GIVE A BROTHER A BREAK!



As if being stuck in a town full of demons wasn't bad enough already, you seem to have stumbled on the only town in America that doesn't have guns lying all over the place (damn you to hell, stupid reality!).

Other items can be used to fight – pot plants, hammers, sticks, batons and the like – but in

a very RPG-y move, they actually break if you use them too much! So now we've got stuff-all weapons and the ones we have break easily. Good thing this *Silent Hill* adventure gives our hero a couple of fat, fast, fists to work with. "Hey nurse, cop it on the peach!" BAM! Er... sorry.



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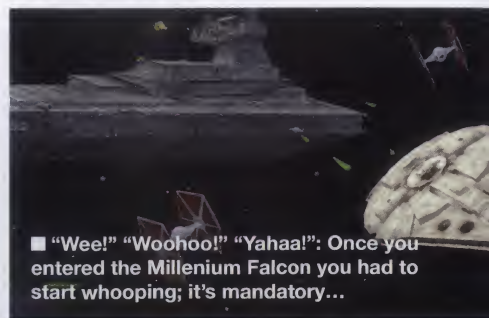
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# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** ACTION  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-16  
■ **RELEASE:** OCTOBER 2007  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA  
■ **DEVELOPER:** LUCASARTS  
■ **WEB:** www.lucasarts.com



■ "Weel!" "Woohoo!" "Yahaa!": Once you entered the Millennium Falcon you had to start whooping; it's mandatory...



■ It's just a DANCE PARTY!



■ Happy now, nerds? Han shot first. Now untie the twist in your panties and go find a girl. Sheesh...

## STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT: RENEGADE SQUADRON

Dah dah da-daaah, daaah, da-da-da-daaah daah...

Whether you're a hardcore *Star Wars* fan who dresses up like a storm trooper to pop down the shops because you think: "the ladies love the 'trooper look, yo!" (Side bar: they don't) or just "quite liked the trilogy. The original one! Jar Jar Binks makes me want to punch infants in the neck!", *Star Wars Battlefront: Renegade Squadron* has probably got something for you. And just when you thought titles couldn't get any longer.

We first had a gander at this title earlier this year. Now, despite making an, apparently, fat sack of cash – *Star Wars Battlefront II* for PSP was just... not that great. It felt like a port of a much better PS2 game – which is exactly what it is – and the limitations stuck out like giant antlers on a corgi.

Sure there was some fun to be had if you had a few mates to link up with; but the animation was choppy, the models unattractive and there was a certain feeling of: "Is that it?" In the words of the guys who made the game: "the space combat was kind of... shitty."

Forget all that. For now we have a PSP-specific *Battlefront* game and it's quite different from all *Battlefronts* before.

For a start you're not some generic storm trooper/rebel dude – you can customise your character. First up choose the race you want to be (human, scrotum-chin-dude, fish-head-man-with sunburn – all the favourites). Quick tip: the dreadlock-sporting Wookiee was an

office favourite. Especially when you equip him with a shotgun, a jetpack and some explosives – the more points you get, the more you can pimp up your character.

Yes, the customisation has been given a kick up the arse and now you can be... well, pretty much what you want to be. Not a human with a Chewbacca head, mind you (frankly that just raises more questions than it answers – strange unsettling questions) but compared to other *Battlefronts* where you just picked a 'character type' and went with it – this system is remarkably detailed.

Modes of play come in three flavours. The first is Instant Action – if you can't work out what that is perhaps you shouldn't be operating something as complex as a magazine. Campaign, the real meat of the game, has Han Solo sending you on missions against the empire. Unfortunately we don't get to see Han quite as much as we'd like.

There's also a puzzle game called Galactic Conquest. But to be honest we found ourselves going back to the main game. The level of customisable options is very impressive, the missions actually make sense rather than just shooting wave after wave of baddies and the space battles are now... fun!

The graphics still won't win any awards, and the animation has its choppy moments – but you'll probably be having too much fun to care. We reckon PSP owners are in for a bit of a treat when this drops in October. **Anthony O'Connor**

### WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "The most customisable and intriguing *Battlefront* game to date. Every time you play you can literally have a different adventure."

### WHAT WE SAY:

■ Honestly, they'd sold us at "Wookiee with a jetpack".

### WE DON'T NEED ANOTHER HERO!



Hang on a gosh-darn second, we hear you yelp, isn't that Han Solo facing down Boba Fett with a steely gaze

and a handsome grimace? It sure is, kids. Oh, and does that happen to be perennial whiner Luke Skywalker dressed up in his emo black *Return of the Jedi* clobber wielding his metro green lightsaber? You bet it is. You'll have many of these moments both on ground and in space. A lot of A-list *Star Wars* characters make cameos. Mark Hamill's still gotta eat, right?



■ Luke Skywalker: loves Panic! at the Disco and Fall Out Boy...







# GIVE YOURSELF A HAN

*Star Wars Battlefront: Renegade Squadron* and PSPs up for grabs!

Ever wondered why the original *Star Wars* movies were so much better than the new prequels? Sure, the fight scenes and effects in the prequels were tonnes better, and Anakin Skywalker was no more of a whiney little bitch than Luke was, but they just couldn't match the charm or personality of the original flicks. And most of that charm came from Harrison Ford's scene-stealing Han Solo.

The point we're getting to in our roundabout way is that Han Solo rocks and he's finally got his own game. *Star Wars Battlefront: Renegade Squadron* sees Han leading small groups of Rebels against the Empire in a series of skirmishes set during the events of *A New Hope* and *Return of the Jedi*. Being

the best-selling *Star Wars* videogame franchise ever it's no surprise that, like Han, *Battlefront* rocks!

If you'd like to win a copy of *Star Wars Battlefront: Renegade Squadron* AND a new slim PSP, firing us an entry for this competition. The top blokes at Activision have offered up five PSPs and five copies of the game for you lucky buggers. All you have to do to enter is answer the following question, mark your entries 'Star Wars PSP giveaway' and see page 15 for entry details.

**Question: What's your favourite battle scene from any of the six *Star Wars* movies?**

**WIN**  
PSPs and  
Star Wars  
games!



**M** Moderate Violence

*This is living.*





PLAYSTATION 3

# WARHAWK



## YOU'RE ALWAYS SOMEBODY'S PREY

Sure you could try and go it alone in a 32 man battle. Just don't come crying when the other guy's organised an ambush with a tank and a Warhawk. Form a coalition, talk and organise yourself against enemy clans. Instruct and coordinate your squad actions by using the JABRA 135 Bluetooth® headset bundled with the Blu-ray disc version of the game. It's compact, easy to use and has up to 8 hours talk time. It's the perfect ally. Playable online for free\* exclusively via PLAYSTATION®Network. You can also bring your friends along with 4-way split screen mode. Now decide if you are the hunter or the prey.

MULTIPLAYER ONLY: ONLINE-LAN-SPLIT SCREEN

PLAYSTATION®  
Network

Free to play online\*



PLAYSTATION 3





# NECTAR OF THE GODS

Drugs ruin lives. We know this for a fact because we played *Haze*, overdosed on Nectar, and saw plenty of lives ruined - several hundred. We handled the ruining ourselves...

**WORDS: ADAM MATHEW**





■ "Does anyone know where we're going?" "Of course not, I can't see shit through these stupid yellow helmets..."

**W**e recently got drafted by Ubisoft and shipped away to Sony HQ for a free crew cut and a hands-on play test of one of this year's most promising releases, *Haze*. For those of you who haven't caught the buzz already, *Haze* is the forthcoming first-person shooter from talented developers Free Radical, whose previous credits include the exceptionally good *TimeSplitters* series.

The story of *Haze* is set 25 years in the future and centers around Shane Carpenter, a fresh recruit who has joined an organisation named Mantel hoping to find fulfillment and adventure by fighting for a good cause. Mantel, while sounding deceptively like a fruity telephone hotline, is a massive militarised corporation that plays a similar role to the United Nations and uses its super high-tech army to neutralise a "vicious" terrorist group known as the Promise Hand. To make their just cause easier the company supplies its troops with an ability enhancing super-drug called nectar.

#### SAY "MAYBE" TO DRUGS

Nectar is essentially a power-up that imbues your character with near

god-like soldiering abilities. When it's administered your enemies become bright incandescent targets, your movements are greatly accelerated, your melee attacks send people flying, you're granted limited pre-cognitive abilities, and your auto-aim gets so sharp you can shoot individual bits of dandruff off people (well, maybe not that good, but you're getting the idea). On the first level we were inserted into the lush jungles of South America and had to use our newfound powers to quell an insurgency caused by Promise Hand resistance fighters. What unfolded next was vaguely reminiscent of an action scene in the movie *Predator*, where there's a huge firefight between Arnie's Special Forces team and a ragtag bunch of jungle guerillas. Our enemies clearly didn't have much of a chance against us, partly because of our superior firepower and partly because we were ruthlessly efficient killing machines hopped up on goofballs. Said goofballs were fantastic when we used them in moderation – but remember when your grandma sat you down and said "too much of a good thing can be bad for you"? The old girl was onto something.

Over indulging with your Nectar or having the containment tank damaged will have you overdosing on the battlefield – and we're not talking "excuse me while I kiss the sky", we're talking a full blown psychotic episode more along the lines of "excuse me, while I make you die". Basically your HUD will stop differentiating friend from foe; meaning if something is unfortunate enough to wander past your crosshairs, you'll automatically let loose with whatever gun your crazy junkie hands are holding. The downsides don't end there either, because Nectar is also a powerful hallucinogenic agent that allows the Mantel Corporation to blind you from the truth of the situation and the consequences of your trigger finger.

Nectar alters your visual perceptions in real-time and the graphics engine in *Haze* is quite clever in the way it handles the phenomenon. Throughout the game you're shown two distinctly different realities; the real world as it is, and the hazy Nectar "directors cut" version that Mantel brainwashes its military with. When you're strapped in your custom made "propaganda suit" everything takes on an unearthly yellow tint and life is just

■ "Say hello to my little friend!" (unzipping sound)





a peachy-keen stroll with your favourite assault rifle. Wrapped in the snug confines of your helmet everything is artificially beautiful; the sun is shining, the occasional butterfly flutters by- and if you stand there long enough one may even land on the barrel of your gun. The only things missing are some happy elves in lollipop houses with sunbeam smiles.

With regards to the rest of the visuals everything looked incredible and was right where it was supposed to be. The futuristic guns were suitably vicious looking, the grenades sent people flying like resistance fighting ragdolls, and the steamy jungle environment showed off an impressive lighting system with individual beams of sunlight piercing their way through the canopy above. The game

handled mid-level cut-scenes extremely well also, when at a key part in the level it assumed control of our character to show us some carpet bombing being done by our air support. In a minor, but decidedly classy touch, we could still pan and zoom the camera, or change and reload our weapons, and while it may sound trivial, it's little flourishes like this that combine to make *Haze* a great gaming experience.

But by far the most impressive visual effect of our whole experience was when we overdosed and went bat-shit crazy. When that happens to you your view has a motion-sickness inducing tilt, your virtual eyes will struggle for focus and things generally become a jumbled mess. This coupled with the distant, distorted concerns of your teammates, the rasping sound of your breath, and the frantic thumping of your heartbeat, works wonders in producing a

genuine sense of wrongness. The stellar use of audio continued to impress us on the second level, which was the lovechild of *Motorstorm* and *Mad Max*.

#### WANNA BE IN OUR GANG?

For our next mission we commandeered an armoured Mantel buggy and were required to deftly navigate through a series of canyons with two AI teammates riding shotgun either side and another one manning the attached minigun.

Amid the relentless attacks of some hodgepodge resistance vehicles the AI spouted some great battle chatter, by constantly telling us to "stay frosty" and "call in a bird to cover us" along with other choice bits of dialogue that could have been ripped straight from a cult sci-fi flick.

One notable feature of the interaction with our Mantel buddies was the occasional bit of peer pressure they'd send our way. It wasn't uncommon for one of them to

pipe up with "hey this Nectar stuff is great", or "are you using your nectar buddy? It improves your aim". It's a clever feature that not only served as an in-game tutorial but also reinforced the feeling of being coerced by Mantel propaganda. It's almost as if they were telling us "Nectar puts hair on your chest, and if you're not into it you can't be in our yellow helmet gang".

Whatever their true motives may have been; the AI teammates did an effective job of soldiering, and while they did hold their own quite well, their aggression levels were balanced as such that they weren't interfering when we were getting our 'kill on'. That is, of course, assuming they weren't in the middle of a crazy Nectar overdose - courtesy isn't high on their list during those particular events. However it must be said that they didn't seem nearly as useful during the vehicle stage as they did on-foot. Our ones dropped like Paris Hilton's underpants.

The final level we were shown was a surprisingly different experience



#### PURPLE HAZE, ALL IN MY BRAIN...

While the developers haven't gone on the record to say what their inspiration for *Haze* is, we can't help but notice an interesting parallel with the Vietnam War and disturbing incidents involving drugs, combat and friendly fire.

According to a U.S Command report in 1970 an estimated 60,000 soldiers were suspected of experimenting with hard drugs. These reports have also recorded numerous instances of friendly fire incidents caused by drug abuse, and far worse still they also document over 200 incidents of deliberate friendly fire or "fragging" in which unpopular American officers were targeted by disgruntled troops under their command.

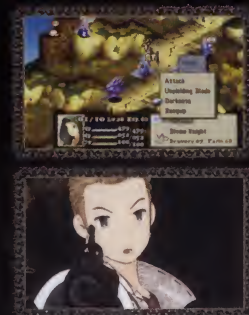




# MASTERPIECE



From The Creative Minds Behind FINAL FANTASY® XII



**PG**

Mild fantasy violence,  
Mild themes,  
Mild coarse language

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**PSP**

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altogether. At some point in the game you're given the opportunity to experience life on the other side of the fence as one of the Promise Hand – and life is a lot tougher when you don't have any instant superman drugs to rely upon. As a resistance fighter your movements are noticeably slower, the weapons available to you aren't as effective, and worst of all: your ex-super friends want your head. If you want to survive confrontations with them you'll have to drastically alter your approach to combat by relying upon stealth, trickery and exploiting the weaknesses in Mantel's technology.

The first option, stealth, is pretty self explanatory; you simply avoid standing toe to toe with a Mantel trooper, especially if there's a pack of them. If you do get yourself surrounded then it's time to hit the 'play dead' button, which is where the trickery aspect comes into play. Nectar is designed to show the Mantel troops a horror-free version of warfare and as such it filters out atrocities and anything remotely corpse looking. So when things look like they are going pear shaped do a 'Fabio Grosso'

by purposefully taking a dive and letting the danger pass you by.

The final trick up your sleeve is using Mantel's own drug supplies against them. Once you eliminate a trooper you can quickly smear some of his nectar on either your knife or on one of your grenades. Your nectar covered grenade will now create a gas cloud that stuns any troopers in its vicinity, and if you stab someone with a nectar laden knife they'll immediately overdose. Failing that, a well placed shot to the nectar intake line on the back of a troopers head will send him bonkers as well. These tactics will soon become key to your survival and they offered us a refreshing challenge when compared to our experiences as a minion of Mantel. Thankfully Free Radical has decided to retain the use of these cool gameplay elements in the multiplayer modes. Time to get stabby.

#### WE SPELL TEAM WITH FOUR 'I'S

Haze's deathmatch mode will allow you to play for Mantel or the Promise Hand and just like the campaign mode you'll have to play to your faction's strengths

“...do a ‘Fabio Grosso’ by purposefully taking a dive and letting the danger pass you by...”


and exploit the weaknesses of the enemy. In this sense *Haze* may offer a multiplayer experience for every gamer's taste. The gung ho players can opt for the vulgar display of power that is being a Mantel super soldier, the sneaky Petes can play dead as a resistance fighter and reappear for a coup de grace knife strike, and the random troublemakers can hop into a buggy and indiscriminately run everyone over while mashing the horn that plays 'La Cucaracha' – until they're booted. The deathmatch was a very tempting option, but we decided to get better acquainted with one of *Haze*'s more exciting modes instead – an online co-operative mode which allows you experience the campaign with three friends, assuming they're available.

Our first session of co-operative mode was complete and utter chaos. One of us managed to overdose and promptly opened fire on someone else, then the victim cracked the shits and hurled a grenade back, and when the other two teammates received some unwanted splash damage – a glorious all-in brawl began. The shenanigans continued until someone emerged the victor, healed all the losers and we continued with our mission – until two minutes later when some smart arse shot somebody in the back of the head, and the hilarity started again. The second time through, rivalries were put aside and we played through as a tightly-knit group and the experience was phenomenally tactical. While one of us perched on a hill and triggered his nectar abilities to make his handgun as effective

as a sniper rifle, two others wound their way down the cliff behind some cover to suppress, and our point man waded into the enemy and triggered a berserker overdose. It was a truly awesome scene to behold.

All in all, we left Sony HQ bleary eyed and super keen to get our hands on the finished version. We think that it's probably a good thing that Free Radical has stepped away from the stylised visuals and comedic gameplay of the *TimeSplitters* series to deliver something that is far more gritty and photo realistic. Also the series was criticised for having loose uninteresting storylines, which we don't imagine will be an issue with *Haze*, given the intriguing nature of what we've been shown so far.

Big props have to be given to Free Radical for reintroducing the disarming of opponents and the inclusion of throwing knives. Both of these features are immensely cool additions that have been done before, but for some reason don't make their way into most shooters nowadays. There is something undeniably suave about dispatching an opponent with his own gun and sinking a knife between some dude's eyes from twenty metres away.

Free Radical is utilising its vast shooter experience to create a truly unique shooter. We're already getting withdrawal symptoms waiting for our next fix. 



#### 20/20 FORESIGHT

Mantel's patented 'nutritional supplement' comes with an interesting side effect; a fancy Nostradamus-esque ability called 'Nectar Foresight'. Foresight is basically a sixth sense that warns you if something untoward is about to happen, such as an enemy grenade detonating or somebody attempting to snipe you. You will see a rippling effect from the point where it is about to occur – thus giving you a window of opportunity to react. That's one hell of a good nutritional supplement; must be all them fancy electrolytes what's in it.







FROM THE CREATORS OF HITMAN  
AN IO INTERACTIVE & EIDOS PRODUCTION

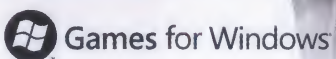
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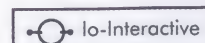
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Strong Violence, Strong  
Sexual References,  
Strong Drug References,  
Language, Nudity.



PLAYSTATION 3





WORDS: LUKE REILLY

# YOU DON'T WIN FRIENDS WITH SALAD



Something strange is going on. *The Simpsons* games are getting better. They're going from licensed drivel to praiseworthy properties. Please do not panic. Resist the temptation to read something else or talk to loved ones. Do not attempt sexual relations, as years of TV radiation have left your genitals withered and useless. Read on...



■ "Homer no function beer well without..."

"A NEW TECHNIQUE FLATTENS THE CHARACTER MODELS FROM ANY VIEWING ANGLE."

■ The Amish, surprisingly violent

■ "They fight, they fight, fight and fight and fight"



There have been 22 games based on *The Simpsons* – and that's not including two pinball games.

In 1991, Konami released *The Simpsons*, a beat 'em up arcade game not unlike Konami's own *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* two years earlier. It was simple, sure, but it was a success. In 2003, Vivendi released *The Simpsons Hit & Run*, which boasted a massive sandbox Springfield and the involvement of *The Simpsons* writers. This game too was a quality hit which pleasantly shocked critics and fans alike.

The rest, however, aren't even worth mentioning.

**"DUFFMAN IS THRUSTING IN THE DIRECTION OF THE PROBLEM!"**

The problem is licensed games pumped out quickly for bottom dollar rarely amaze – and *The Simpsons* is no exception. This is perhaps the major reason *The Simpsons: Hit & Run* genuinely surprised gamers – after years of poxy half-arsed skateboarding and wrestling tie-ins here was a game made for *Simpsons* fans by *Simpsons* fans. It

didn't dazzle technically, it didn't push the boundaries of storytelling – but it did entertain, which put it ahead of its predecessors.

But it also means expectations for the next *Simpsons* game are high. Or, at least, higher than usual...

**"KIDS, YOU TRIED YOUR BEST AND YOU FAILED MISERABLY. THE LESSON IS, NEVER TRY"**

Now there's been a bit of to and fro-ing since Matt Groening's dysfunctional yellow-skinned quintet graced our consoles. EA scooped up the license, which saw development of the next *Simpsons* game shift from Radical Entertainment to EA Redwood Shores.

EA's *The Simpsons Game* is quite a different beast to *Hit & Run*. The most marked difference between the two are the visuals. In stark contrast to the solid 3D-rendered graphics that have plagued the most recent *Simpsons* games, *The Simpsons Game* makes fantastic use of cel-shading to achieve a look that is faithful to the original animation in virtually every way. Without a word of a lie, it took some time for us to realise the opening cut-scene was, in fact, in-game graphics and not 2D animation.

Unlike 'traditional' cel-shading, *The Simpsons Game* features a new technique that flattens the character

models from any viewing angle. In the past, for instance, when translated into the third dimension Lisa's spiky hair turns into a distracting mess of upturned cones. In *The Simpsons Game*, however, her hair – and the rest of her body – flattens as she turns. The result is an on-screen character that matches the show's 2D art.

**"FACTS ARE MEANINGLESS. YOU COULD USE FACTS TO PROVE ANYTHING THAT'S EVEN REMOTELY TRUE!"**

The concept behind *The Simpsons Game* is remarkably original, although it's a wonder the premise has never been used before. To briefly explain, the *Simpsons* become self-aware inside their own videogame and begin to test the limits of their new virtual reality with all manner of crazy abilities.

The tutorial mission sees Homer in the land of chocolate – a certified classic gag and one of the most memorable scenes of the entire series. Players will learn the ropes in a world of choc-coated cottages and candy-covered cupcakes as Homer cuts a swathe of sweet, sweet destruction through the sugar-dusted utopia. But this level is really just a daydream. Shortly afterwards Bart discovers a videogame manual in a dark abandoned alleyway...

And that's when things get really outrageous...



## "PRICELESS LIKE A MOTHER'S LOVE, OR THE GOOD KIND?"

It's been reported that EA hired a team of lawyers for the sole purpose of handling the potentially sensitive copyright tiptoeing *The Simpsons Game* requires. Picture, if you would, the videogame equivalent of *Last Action Hero* and *Loaded Weapon 1* – a game where the characters know they're in a videogame (and know how to exploit it) and that features an near-endless procession of genre in-jokes, peer piss-taking and self-referential humour. Spoofs like *The Simpsons Game* are protected to a degree by the idea that parody is generally safe from being construed as copyright infringement by the fair use argument, although with jibes at other videogames in the guise of levels called 'God of Wharf', 'Grand Theft Scratchy' and 'Shadow of the Colossal Donut Man' it's easy to see why EA is being cautious. EA's own properties like *Batman Begins* and *Medal of Honor* given the Simpsons treatment are naturally no worry (that's 'Bartman Begins' and 'Medal of Homer' – of course), but even these levels satire other games – with the latter including a secret path to Castle Duffenstein (that's *Wolfenstein* for those of you who don't really know anything about videogames and are just reading this magazine to pass the time before your haircut).

## "I BENT MY WOOKIEE"

*The Simpsons Game* reminds us a lot of the *LEGO Star Wars* series – they both feature vibrant, colourful visuals, an irreverent sense of humour, basic yet robust gameplay and two-player co-op support. The action platforming is simple, with few surprises, but it's given a great deal of mileage thanks to the sly *Simpsons* references and genuine satire.

But what of these special abilities? As we mentioned, each member of the Simpson family has a signature move that you'll need to use quite a bit. Bart, for instance, has his Bartman abilities that allow him to glide using his cape and perform a variety of other dextrous moves the rest of clan can't. In one of the earlier levels he was also able to become Robo-Bart for a limited amount of time. Homer has a super-powered belch plus the ability to turn into a rolling ball of fat, *We Love Katamari*-style, destroying and devouring everything in his path. We've also seen Homer as a giant green blob (reminiscent of the 'Treehouse of Horror XVII' episode). Lisa has an *Okami*-esque ability to alter the environment itself (in her meditative state she can call upon the Hand of Buddha to reach down from the clouds above) and Marge's hoarse persuasive vocal powers spew out of her megaphone in red nagging rays, compelling all around her to obey and carry out her bidding.

## "GOOD THINGS DON'T END IN -EUM; THEY END IN -MANIA OR -TERIA"

The rest of the running and jumping malarky, from what we could gather from our demo, is standard fare, although the familiar and superbly recreated environments make it a lot of fun in spite of its basic nature. Again, like *LEGO Star Wars*, many of the challenges within the missions are designed with two players in mind. For instance, one mission inside the Springfield Museum saw Homer and Bart wreaking havoc amongst the exhibits. Scrambling along the spine of hefty dinosaur, Homer needed to tilt the skeleton so Bart could sprint up the neck and leap from the fossilised skull into a new, as yet uncovered, area. In another level, 'Around the World in 80 Bites', Bart and Homer compete in an international food eating contest inside the Duff Brewery. It's up to Bart to beat up the likes of Comic Book Guy, Bumblebee Man, Barney, Otto and more while Homer inhales all the grub he can. A little puzzle solving from both parties is required to unlock new areas as the contest proceeds. It's simple stuff, but it makes for a no less engaging two-player romp than LucasArts' *LEGO* larks. What's mildly disappointing, mainly in terms of the PS3 version, is that there aren't any online plans so you'll need to be content with split-screen.

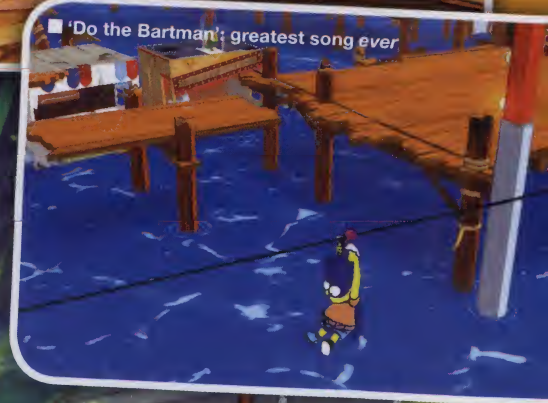
## "NO-ONE'S GAY FOR MOLEMAN"

It should come as no surprise, but *The Simpsons Game* will feature the support of *The Simpsons* voice cast. The result is over 8000 lines of speech, voiced by the cast and penned by Simpsons writers Tim Long, Matt Selman and Matt Warburton. Long is the writer of Emmy Award winning episode 'Behind the Laughter', and Selman was behind 'Natural Born Kissers', an episode notable for its saucy subject matter and the first Simpsons episode to rated M by Channel 10, and the classic 'Future-Drama' ('No one's gay for Moleman...'). Warburton wrote 'Three Gays of the Condo', another Emmy Award winning episode. The authenticity this lends to the dialogue is readily apparent.

## "ON CLOSER INSPECTION, THESE ARE LOAFERS"

*The Simpsons Game* isn't going to revolutionise the industry. It's probably not going to weasel its way into the pantheon of all-time greats, nor change the gaming landscape. But all this is beside the point. The humble hot dog, for instance, isn't exactly a culinary revolution. It will never find itself on the menu at an exclusive restaurant, and there are plenty of things that taste better. But damn it if we don't enjoy one every now and then.

Mmmmmmm... hot dogs. 🌭



## "IT'S A PERFECTLY CROMULENT WORD"

*The Simpsons*' effect on popular culture is absolutely mammoth. *The Simpsons* has coined many words and phrases that have entered popular use. The University of Pennsylvania's Mark Liberman, director of the Linguistic Data Consortium, has said, "*The Simpsons* has apparently taken over from Shakespeare and the Bible as our culture's greatest source of idioms, catchphrases and sundry other textual allusions."

In 2001, Homer's trademark "D'oh!" was listed in the Oxford English Dictionary, although a number of other words and phrases have become neologisms like embiggens, cromulent and cheese eating surrender monkeys.





# "EXCELLENT"

OPS quizzes game designer Greg Rizzer and senior producer Jonathan Knight

**OPS:** *The Simpsons* has won 23 Emmy Awards, 22 Annie Awards and was named by *Time Magazine* best television series of the 20th Century. The games, largely, are not looked upon as fondly. Is there a concerted effort to make this one the defining *Simpsons* game?

**GR:** Absolutely. Many of us have played those games and are well aware of the reputation that was attached to this license. When we asked a lot of the fans which games stood out as fun, it was actually the old-school side scroller that always comes up as the most revered. I think one of the reasons for this

with the creative team in LA. The concept for the game came from the writers and the game design came from us, and together we crafted the sequence of events, the levels, the characters. Their feedback has been invaluable.

**OPS:** *The Simpsons Game* finally sees a title that maintains the integrity of the show's visuals. How have you achieved the 2D-look?

**GR:** Our technical art team and rendering team have delivered on more than I thought was possible. The team created a colour tagging system that knows when to draw the black lines in a scene that may share similar colors. This tool is incredibly complex and required so much work to pull off. To see this game running in real-time with the cartoon lines matching the art style of the show is really beautiful.

guys are gamers, it wasn't hard to collaborate and come up with the best gags for the game.

**GR:** As for the piss-taking, we've all been working for EA for many years so the opportunity to take jabs at ourselves is a wonderful way to personalise the team and show the gaming world that we, too, don't mind self-deprecating humour. The company has been so great in letting us do this. Many of the teams were excited to hear we were taking shots at them and many of the other teams were asking if they could be in *Simpsons 2*!

Whether it's just a visual gag that references an obscure game or an actual gameplay parody that is using familiar mechanics, we've crammed as many jokes as possible into this single game.

**OPS:** On the back of the success of *LEGO Star Wars*, how important was drop in/drop out co-op?

**GR:** This was a must have for us. Comedy is best enjoyed in groups. Laughing alone is nice, but laughing

and work it into the story. I'm sure two seconds after we ship this game there will be spoilers all over the internet!

**OPS:** What sort of content is hiding in *The Simpsons Game* for die-hards?

**GR:** As I mentioned earlier there are so many little jokes that the die-hard fans may pick up on and others may not. I think that's really true to the show. The action appeals to kids because of the physical comedy and the script appeals to older folks for its social commentary. We try to nail that in the game as well. For example, Homer uses the power of Gummi, which traces back to his trip to the candy convention where he stole the Gummi De Milo (zie rarest Gummi of zem all!) We tried to reference the show as often as possible. Clobber Girl, The Aliens with Board and Nail technology, Mr. Sparkle, the list just goes on and on!



was that you could play together and there were many show references that catered to the fans. I'm happy to say our game delivers on the spirit of both but additionally has an incredibly funny story and the best looking cel-shading ever.

We have a lot to prove. Our team was extremely dedicated to making sure this will be the game that wins the doubters over. There's a million little details in the game and each one is a testimony to how much the team cares about creating the definitive *Simpsons* game.

**OPS:** How much input have you been able to secure from *The Simpsons'* creative team?

**JK:** From the outset of the project, *The Simpsons Game* has been a collaboration

**OPS:** Parodies and spoofs of film and TV are common, but in the games industry such homages and piss-taking are all too rare. It is refreshing to see a game that pokes fun at itself, other games and even its publisher. How did the concept evolve?

**JK:** Again, the concept came from the writers of the show. For years, they have wanted to make an epic *Simpsons* game that satirizes the gaming universe. We were more than happy to take this concept and run with it, and in the beginning, the team started generating ideas for episodes (levels), imagining gameplay, characters, locations, parodies and homages, then we'd kick those back to the writers for feedback. Since those

with your mates is such a rewarding and memorable experience, so we felt that having the ability to drop in or out was a feature we could not live without.


The social aspects of couch play seem to be going away but games like *LEGO* prove that the right franchise and mechanics that are attainable for all skill levels can certainly spell success.

**OPS:** If there's one thing *The Simpsons* is famous for it's its guest stars. Can we expect any surprising cameos in the game?

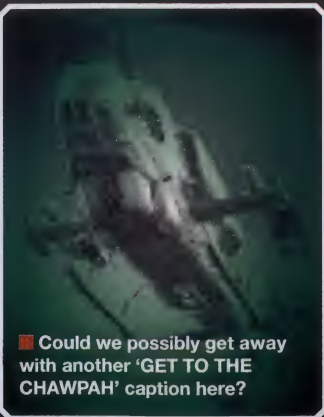
**GR:** Oh yeah! As people may have already heard, Matt Groening himself is in the game. This is surely going to be a VERY memorable level for fans. There are quite a few cameos in the game. I'm really happy we were able to pull them off

There are unlockables but I can't spill the beans yet...

**OPS:** *The Simpsons* has long included jabs at videogames, including *Bonestorm*, *My Dinner with Andre*, *Waterworld*... will any of these see the light of day? Will we get a bonus for entering the name Thrillhouse?

**GR:** Hah.. the best part about Thrillhouse was that system could only accept eight letters so the screen said, "Thrillho." That's comedy. Trust us; if there was a moment *The Simpsons* poked fun at games, we made every effort to get it in. Maybe for *Simpsons 2* we can get Dash Dingo... 





■ Could we possibly get away with another 'GET TO THE CHAWPAH' caption here?

## DEATH FROM ABOVE

Rack up a killing spree in *COD4*'s multiplayer and you can do far more than just gloat about it after the match. Anyone who shoots down three opponents without dying will score the ability to have their enemies marked on the radar. Players who pull off a five-kill-spree will be rewarded with the ability to call in an airstrike. At the touch of a button a pair of fighter jets will do a fly-by and deploy bombs. Any enemies who don't goosetstep it indoors the second they hear the jets coming will be cooked on the spot. Top guns who manage seven-kill-sprees can call on the tornado of termination unleashed by an AI-controlled gunship. These death machines will hang above the battlefield and use their heavy chainguns to carve through opposition like a blowtorch through butter.



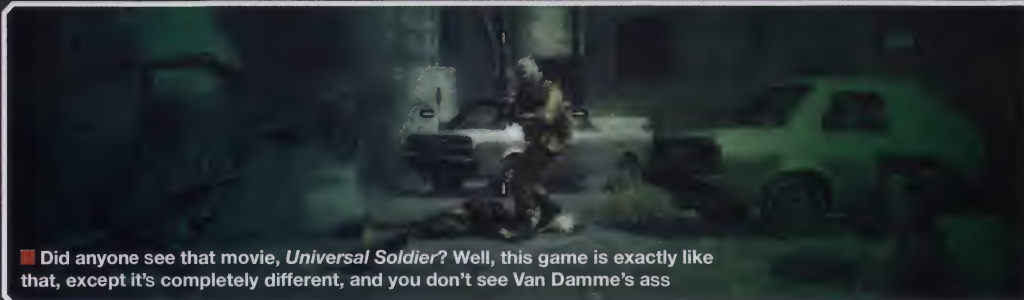
■ And we thought you only took dudes from behind in the navy...



■ Tag! You're It!" "No - YOU'RE IT!" BANG! "Oh, real classy Stankowski, did you really have to kill the guy?"

## SIX MILLION DOLLAR SOLDIER

Another aspect that really separates *COD4*'s multiplayer from the pack is its huge range of special abilities (Perks) that you can kit out your multiplayer character with. Faster sprinting, steadier aiming, greater health and speedy reloads are basic Perks you can choose from. The better Perks let you turn the tide in battle with skills like bullets that can penetrate through walls, grenade launcher attachments for your assault rifles or C4 satchels, which can be flung under cars for extra explosive punch (pictured).



■ Did anyone see that movie, *Universal Soldier*? Well, this game is exactly like that, except it's completely different, and you don't see Van Damme's ass



■ Tell me the truth... does this gas mask make my butt look big?"



# THE WORLD WAR

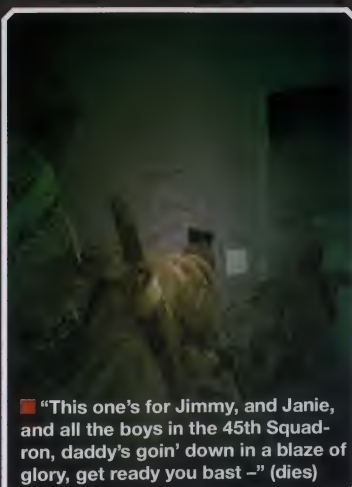
**SIGN UP FOR A GLOBAL CONFLICT WHERE THE ONLY CASUALTIES ARE *CALL OF DUTY 4*'S COMPETITORS**

Fact: If *Call of Duty 4* gets any better we'll explode! The overwhelming intensity and chaos of the single-player action had already convinced us this was THE shooter to beat. Then we played the multiplayer mode. Strap us to a pogo stick and throw us into a minefield if it wasn't just as incredible as the single-player game! *COD4*'s online mode obliterates *Medal of Honor*'s old-fashioned antics, cashes in *Rainbow Six Vegas*' chips, puts an end to the *Resistance* and packs in must-have multiplayer madness that's easily on par with Sony's recent triumph, *Warhawk*. If you don't enlist for *Duty* this November, you're mad. End of story!



## FROM THE GRAVE

There are no med-packs or body armour power-ups in *COD4*. If someone gets a decent bead on you, chances are, you'll be deadlier than fried chicken. Players who've equipped the Last Stand Perk, however, will get a shot at the greatest revenge kill in gaming history. As you collapse, coughing up blood, it's possible to pull out your pistol and squeeze off a few shots during your last dying breaths. Dealing out a dose of post-death payback reaps twice the points of a normal kill and sees the successful player (usually Luke) jump to his feet and yell "YEEEEAAAAHHHHH!" Leaving the robbed-from-the-grave victim (usually Mark) to groan "That. Is. Bullshit!"



■ "This one's for Jimmy, and Janie, and all the boys in the 45th Squadron, daddy's goin' down in a blaze of glory, get ready you bast -" (dies)



■ "Guys, guys... check out this grass! It's so purty..." BANG "Johnson! JOHNSON! Damn it, that's the fifth one we've lost this week. These new recruits just can't stop looking at the grass."



# GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A GAMES JOURNALIST?

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# MORE THAN M

## TO CELEBRATE THE RELEASE OF THE LIMITED EDITION TRANSFORMERS ROBOT DVD PACK WE ARE GIVING YOU THE CHANCE TO TRANSFORM YOUR TECHNOLOGY WITH THE LENOVO THINKPAD R61 NOTEBOOK!

To celebrate the release of the No. 1 action film of the year on DVD, *Transformers*, we have a state of the art Lenovo ThinkPad R61 notebook to give away, as well as exclusive copies of the very special Limited Edition Robot version of the *Transformers* DVD. The *Transformers* Robot DVD is packaged in a DVD cover that actually transforms into a robot – and there are only a very small number being made! *Transformers* is available on DVD on November 1 and the Limited Edition Robot versions are available until stocks last! To be in the draw simply tell us your favourite Transformer and why. Entry details on page 15.

### TRANSFORMERS ON DVD

For centuries, two races of robotic aliens – the Autobots® and the Decepticons® – have waged a war, with the fate of the universe at stake. When the battle comes to Earth, all that stands between the evil Decepticons® and ultimate power is a clue held by young Sam Witwicky (Shia LaBeouf). An average teenager, Sam is consumed with everyday worries about school, friends, cars and girls. Unaware that he alone is mankind's last chance for survival, Sam and his friend Mikaela (Megan Fox) find themselves in a tug of war between the Autobots® and Decepticons.® With the world hanging in the balance, Sam comes to realize the true meaning behind the Witwicky family motto – “No sacrifice, no victory!” *Transformers* stars Shia LaBeouf, Megan Fox, Josh Duhamel, Jon Voight and Rachael Taylor and is brought to you by director Michael Bay and producer Steven Spielberg. The *Transformers* DVD contains out of this world special features including deleted scenes, making of specials, director commentary and much more!





# MEETS THE EYE!

## MAJOR PRIZE

- Lenovo ThinkPad R61 notebook (RRP \$3,899)

## 5 x 2nd PRIZE WINNERS TO RECEIVE:

- A Limited Edition *Transformers* Robot DVD (\$59.95)
  - PlayStation 2 *Transformers* Game from Activision (\$79.95)
  - Transformers T-Shirt from Otaku Wear (\$39.95)
- Pack valued at \$180

## 5 x 3RD PRIZE WINNERS TO RECEIVE:

- A Limited Edition *Transformers* Robot DVD (\$59.95)
  - Transformers T-shirt from Otaku Wear (\$39.95)
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DVDs ARE OUT NOVEMBER  
1, BUT REMEMBER TO BE  
QUICK AS THE ROBOT PACK  
IS A LIMITED EDITION!



## LENOVO THINKPAD R61 NOTEBOOK

Lenovo ThinkPad R Series are affordable, lightweight notebooks with great performance and large, bright displays. The new ThinkPad R61 is the coolest and quietest R Series notebook ever and includes a new 14.1" widescreen option. R Series models can be equipped with Genuine Windows Vista and Intel Dual-Core processors.

### Cutting-edge Features

ThinkPad R61 notebooks are available with some of the latest and greatest technologies.

- A new cooling system, larger vents and more efficient fans make R61 the coolest and quietest R Series model ever. And the new Top Cover Roll Cage (14.1" widescreen models) combines with the ThinkPad Roll Cage and Shock-Mounted Hard Drive to provide a new level of strength and durability.
- In addition, users needing to squeeze every minute out of their battery will appreciate the new BatteryStretch feature standard on all ThinkPad notebooks. Mobile professionals and home users alike can appreciate the new integrated camera on select R61 models. The SXGA resolution camera is perfect for video conferencing, VoIP, and even just chatting with your friends online.

Specifications: R61 7742-i1M, 14.1" WXGA+, 965PM, nVidia 128MB, BT, 1394, FPR, T7500, 160GB / 5400rpm, Standard DVD and Blu-ray Disc compatibility (12.7mm), PC Card+Media, 2GB (2 x 1GB), Intel 11n, Vista-B32, 6 Cell, Centrino Duo

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# POP QUIZ HOTSHOT

Wording: Adam Mathew

## Let's test your PlayStation perspicacity...

**W**ell sir, we were drinking the other night when we were struck with a wholesome idea for a feature. (That's a typo, it's meant to say "wholesome".)

We, as gamers, are by nature a competitive, vain group of individuals. How often have you been out with mates having a beer (or jug of port, as it were) and argued who amongst you knew more about a particular game, who had a ridiculous amount of gaming paraphernalia and, most importantly, whose turn it was to refill your jug.

So Biff thinks that he's a buff does he? Well, we shall soon

sort the wheat from the chaff, the men from the boys, and the hardcore believers from the button bashing bandits with our often copied, but never duplicated, patented PlayStation WORD-ACROSS-O-MAJIG.

Allocate yourself ten minutes to complete it, tally up how many you got right and see how (or if) you rate in this PlayStation general knowledge test. The questions cover multiple PlayStation hardware, multiple eras and multiple gaming genres. And remember serious contenders; Google is for cheating pansies, and as such, doesn't count.

### Headin' Across

3. In the PSone game *Abe's Oddysee* you have to save 99 .....
6. Katana wielding samurai in the *Soul Calibur* series
10. The title of an awesome, yet criminally underplayed action adventure featuring a white wolf
12. A block rocking, block dropping puzzler that relies upon phat beats and a musical timeline
13. Last name of the protagonist in *GTA: San Andreas*
15. A top down isometric racer that had a track called Polar Wharf (and some others, apparently)
16. This *Grand Theft Auto* city is the setting of the first PS2 *GTA* game and the upcoming *GTAIV*
18. Weapons manufacturers in the *Ratchet & Clank* universe
22. Bruce Lee look-a-like in *Tekken 2* .....
23. LucasArts platformer set in a psychic summer camp
26. Official guitar brand of the *Guitar Hero* series
28. A rollable, highly adhesive ball starting with K
29. Cloud Strife has glowing blue eyes due to a large amount of exposure to ...
30. The cheating putting assistant introduced in *Tiger Woods 05: Tiger* .....
32. *The .....* is a kick arse game based off a 1979 cult movie of the same name
33. A massive creature that you'll have to mountain climb, find their weak point and stab
35. Name of the true keyblade master in *Kingdom Hearts*

36. This game has you investigating a conspiracy as the intrepid reporter Jade: ..... *Good & Evil*
37. Developers of the *Tony Hawk* series
38. Awesome online PS2 multiplayer series that feature guys with names like Boomer and Specter
39. The Nazi-esque enemies in the *Killzone* series
43. Favourite underwater sport of the fantasy world "Spiral"
45. *Devil May Cry's* Dante has two hand guns and both are named. The darker one is called...
46. The first boss you skewer in *God of War*
47. Criterion's first foray into first-person shooters
48. Polyphony Digital has created a series of games dubbed "The Real ..... Simulator"

### Goin' Down

1. Daxter was originally an annoying human until he was transformed into an annoying orange .....
2. Demolition derby game featuring a jolly homicidal clown ..... *Metal*
4. The artifact you were seeking in the original *Tomb Raider* and its recent remake
5. Name of your character in *Destroy All Humans!* (Trivia: It's also a diarrhoea causing parasite)
7. Original title for the game *Canis Cadem Edit*
8. Capcom platformer with copious amounts of spandex ..... *Joe*
9. Trippy on-rails shooter that successfully fused techno, hacking and light induced seizures
11. *Burnout 3* introduced this ability to steer your metal corpse and score takedowns: A .....

14. Name of the remote controllable missile weapon in *Metal Gear Solid*
17. This game has you tilting the world to maneuver a cheerful ball of blubber
18. Name of the Namco lightgun
19. Your basic Spanish cursing, pitchfork obsessed enemies in *Resident Evil 4*
20. Double clue: It's the type of fruit that Crash collects AND it's a *Star Wars* ice creature
21. The ..... of time is the weapon in *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* that allows you to rewind time
23. The PSone memory card that had a built in LCD screen and was released exclusively in Japan
24. Platformer series starring a small purple dragon
25. In the first Sly game you were on a quest to recover the five parts of the "..... Raccoonus"
27. Game boss: Cheating bastard and highest ranked racer on *Need for Speed Most Wanted's* Blacklist
31. Solid Snake's real name
33. In the *V8 Supercars* games, what is the name of the famous straight in the Bathurst track
34. In *Ico* you had a hand holding fixation with .....
40. The name of the PlayStation 2's CPU: The ..... Engine
41. Title of the sequel to *SSX*
42. A questionably named vehicle class in *Motorstorm Mud .....*
44. The "big-risk-huge-reward-tinge-if-it-connects" move from *Fight Night Round 3*





## EGO DESTROYING RATING SYSTEM

So how good aren't you?

**0-5 correct:** Let us guess: *Official Pipe Organ Magazine* was sold out

**6-10 correct:** You push on the buttons because you like the purty shapes on them

**11-15 correct:** You enjoy a nip of brandy and a play of *Tetris* once every Xmas

**16-20 correct:** You have the gift youngling, but we sense much fear in you

**21-25 correct:** You're okay, but you're suffering from early onset Alzheimers

**26-30 correct:** It's time to renew your membership at Average Joe's Gym

**31-35 correct:** You're definitely above the commoners, but below the awesomers

**36-40 correct:** Impressive... MOST Impressive...

**41-45 correct:** The calluses mark you grasshopper, but true perfection eludes you

**45-48 correct:** Dude. You'd give that kid in *The Wizard* a run for his money



# ONLINE

The latest PS3 Network news, online reviews, reader online section and more!

## WHAT'S NEW?

The latest PlayStation Store goodies

### Accessing overseas PlayStation Stores

It's important to know that you don't have to get by with just the downloads on the Australian PS Store. You can setup overseas profiles on your PS3 and simply sign in as them to access the extra content available on the US and Hong Kong stores. To do this simply set up a new profile and enter an American or Hong Kong address. This way when you access the store using this profile you will be taken to the overseas stores. What's also cool is that once you start a download from an overseas store, you can switch back to your main Australian profile, start playing a game, and it will continue to download the content you started with a different profile.



### Aussie Store

It's a bit dry on the Aussie front this month people, but since you probably blew your entire download cap all over the awesome stuff from last month, now might be a good time to catch up on all things you never got round to checking out; such as the *GRAV2* and *Heavenly Sword* demos. That being said there are a couple of titbits well worth a look, such as the *DIRT* demo, and the newly released *Gran Turismo 5* trailers. The *GT* content is looking especially delicious, if you watch from a distance, or an awkward angle, you may actually convince yourself you're watching real life...



### USA Store

Although you won't be able to download the full version (unless you have a US credit card and a legit US billing address – unlikely) it's definitely worth checking out the *Super Puzzle Fighter II* demo for shits and giggles, because it really is a top notch game. If you happen to be a big 'sports guy' it may be a good idea to download the gargantuan amounts of sports demos on offer, such as the new *Tiger Woods* game and *All-Pro Football 2K8*. As always, there's a huge range of free movie trailers including *Beowulf*, *National Treasure 2* and the upcoming *Bee Movie*. Gentlemen, start your modems.

## PAIN

Welcome to the pain train...

■ Developer: IDLE MINDS ■ Publisher: SONY ■ Out: NOW ■ Players: 1-2

Unless you are a closet emo, cutting yourself so you can feel, pain is not fun. It hurts... a lot. But imagine pain didn't hurt... imagine pain was totally hilarious. Imagine you got points for pain, and putting yourself through the most excruciating pain possible resulted in cool stuff, as opposed to huge hospital bills and a grisly death.

This is the idea behind *PAIN*, a game currently in development for download on the PlayStation Store. Featuring tongue in cheek humour, and three recently announced games modes (titled *Spank the Monkey*, *Mime Toss*, and *Paindemonium*) *PAIN* looks set to be the perfect addition to the PS3 burgeoning collection of downloadable games.

Up until now painful incidents have only been funny when they happen to other people. Now you can laugh when you put the hurt on yourself. Expect this game to be released soon on the PS Store.



## Snakeball

Insert suggestive 'snake' pun here...

■ Developer: SONY ■ Publisher: SONY ■ Out: NOW ■ Players: 1-TBA

Remember *Snake* – that game on the old Nokia mobile phones? The one where a primitive straight line would clumsily strafe across the screen in an attempt to eat some dots and inevitably grow larger to the extent that you would eventually crash into your own insanely long body and die. Well *Snakeball*, on the PlayStation Store is that game times a thousand, with added game mechanics, and added weaponry.

The 'ball' in the title refers to the fact that, instead of collecting indistinguishable grey 'blobs', in *Snakeball* you collect (you guessed it) balls. These balls can then be fired, either into a designated home, to collect points, or at the many enemies

inhabiting the game space.

In this crazy disco-ish landscape there are also various types of weapons to help dispose of the baddies, including a SIXAXIS controlled missile. All in all, well worth a look for fans of old school gameplay.



**FYI**

Please don't feel left out if we can't add you to our friends list because they max out at 50 and ours are often full.

## OPS READER SECTION

Get your game on with other OPS readers

Assasin\_Killer – Resistance  
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MrTerminator – Resistance  
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sir\_gazman – Resistance  
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PLAYSTATION 3



# REVIEWS

As promised, here you'll find *OPS'* new 1-10 scoring system. There haven't been too many drastic changes, but we're making an effort towards greater distinction between scores. Check here for the skinny behind each number but, as always, at the end of the day the score is an arbitrary decision based on an overall impression – if you want to know the full story, read the review.

## REVIEW RATINGS

**01** Reserved for the very worst that developers have to offer.

Essentially, anything that receives this score has no redeeming qualities whatsoever. A game receiving this score could not possibly be any worse, unless it was broken from the outset (or gave you cancer, or killed your dog). A game that should never have even survived its first pitch – as bad as it gets.

**02** A terrible, terrible game. There may be one or two

things about this game that work, or aren't actually broken, but they are so hopelessly outnumbered by the sheer quantity of badness that they basically cease to exist. Maybe it has a clever name, maybe the concept was sound – but virtually every single thing about it is bad beyond belief. Not worth the effort.

**03** Very disappointing. A game with this score is

fundamentally flawed in a number of extremely vital ways. There may be one or two things that could've been done somewhat worse than they have been, but for most part it's totally uninspired, boring and unappealing in every way. There are games that are worse, but there's not that many.

**04** Poor. There may be parts of this game that are

vaguely fun, and it may be robust enough in a few departments, but the overall package is lacking any significant reason to stick it out. Games receiving this score may show initial promise, or sound good at first, but will be unrefined, undercooked and let down by shoddy execution and poor attention to detail.

**05** Mediocre. In the strictest terms, 50% is a pass – just.

Unfortunately, a game receiving this score will have had just as many things go wrong with it as go right, and that really isn't enough to succeed. A game receiving this score will probably be entertaining in parts without excelling anywhere, yet equally sub-par in others without being outright awful.

**06** Decent enough, although still lacking a certain

something. A game receiving this score will be sound, but will have some fairly glaring faults and your interest will probably wane pretty quickly. It will have a number of limitations that will probably turn off more than a few gamers, but will get just enough right to keep dedicated fans of the genre ploughing through.

**07** Good. A robust, fun game that's well worth a look,

although will only rarely amaze. A game receiving this score will have more or less accomplished nearly all it set out to do in a decent fashion, but it will have some noticeable problems that prevent it from being as good as it could be. Nevertheless, they generally won't ruin the overall gaming experience.

**08** Great. A game receiving this score comes highly

recommended. A combination of some odd issues, minor problems or a lack of innovation may hamper it somewhat, but the overall impression it leaves is very positive. Very entertaining, very satisfying and you wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to others. Well ahead of the pack in most departments.

**09** Excellent. Outstanding in almost every way.

Some negligible blemishes will just keep it from being held aloft as a true masterpiece, but it is very likely the best in its field. Most elements of this game will be truly remarkable and you'll be hard-pressed to find too many other games of greater quality. An astonishing game that leaves all but the very best behind.

**10** Incredible. Everything went right during the creation of this game.

A game receiving a perfect 10 does not necessarily mean it is perfect, likely just teasingly close, but to reserve 10s for THE perfect game is pointless. Instead, a 10 represents a game of gobsmacking brilliance, a game that stands high above the rest and a game that you cannot afford to ignore. A masterpiece.

## THE OPS AWARDS



**The Gold Award**  
is a rare gem and only to be given to games that score that magic 10/10. This score indicates gaming of simply incredible quality!



**The Silver Award**  
is for games that receive 9/10. If you see this, it's a sign of star quality, indicating that you should buy this game now!



**The Bronze Award**  
is for games that score 8/10. These games are highly recommended and are 100% guaranteed to satisfy.

## OPS REVIEW SETUP



We choose to review our games on a super-slick Full HD 1080p 40" Bravia X-series for the best picture possible. This sucker melts eyeballs...

## INSIDE...

PS3



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PS2



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PSP



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- Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2 p98



# PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **GENRE:** ACTION  
■ **RELEASE:** SEPTEMBER 2007  
■ **DEVELOPER:** INGOGNITO  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** SONY

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-32  
■ **PRICE:** \$49.95 (PSN) \$99.95 (RETAIL)  
■ **HD:** 720p  
■ **WEB:** [www.warhawk.com](http://www.warhawk.com)

■ **BACK STORY:** *Warhawk* is a remake of a flight combat game of the same name created by SingleTrac and released on the original PlayStation. This version is a remake in the loosest sense of the word, focusing on the online experience.

■ "Echo to base, someone's throwing lava lamps at me! I need support! ARGH..." (static)



■ Not pictured: King Kong

## WARHAWK

Is it a bird or is it a plane?

If we're going to be completely honest here, *Warhawk* is a game that most of us here at *OPS* stopped caring much about some time ago. Third-person combat, you say? With jets? And it's multiplayer only now? And it's delayed? Right...

Frankly, we were in the process of moving onto other things...

And then it hit the office.

Tighter than a bull's arse on fight night and smoother than a glass of Guinness, *Warhawk* is a seriously superior piece of software. We don't always like letting the cat out of the bag early but if you own a PS3, you need to own *Warhawk*. It's THAT simple. We

can't go a day in the office without an afternoon fix of *Warhawk*. It's more addictive than crack. Or so we hear.

### UP IN THE AIR

There's some sort of humdrum backstory behind this that we're sure meant a lot more when the game was still destined to release with its single-player mode intact. From what we gather, soldiers from one fictional country are wreaking havoc in another fictional country. The Chernovans, the bad guys for all intents and purposes, are walloping several different kinds of shit out of the Euçadians – ransacking their cities and villages, blowing things

up and generally making a menace of themselves nationwide (kicking dogs, talking back to the elderly, leaving the seat up – that kind of thing). It's all relatively meaningless though, serving as little more than a reason to have some dudes in grey uniforms fighting dudes in green ones.

But man, is the fighting something else or what?

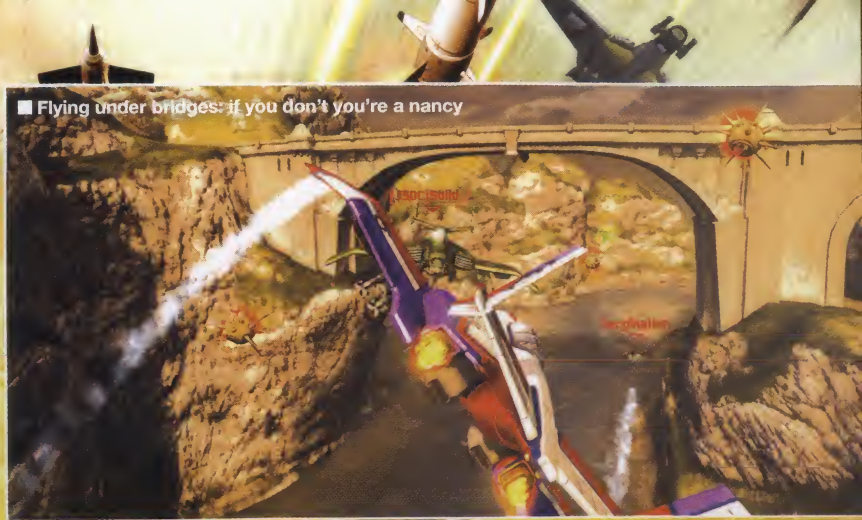
### START A FIGHT

A third-person shooter at heart, *Warhawk* is a simple and unpretentious affair – all you need to do is shoot a load of people. Your mates, presumably, or whoever you meet online. That's all

PlayStation  
**SILVER AWARD**  
9/10









there is to it. The controls, while lacking some of the finesse of a first-person shooter, are satisfying and easy to master. The shooting can feel a little inaccurate at times but a soft lock-on system that snaps to targets your reticule is aimed at eases any frustration. It's the vehicles, however, that make *Warhawk* fantastic. The AA guns that fill the air with flak are great, the open-top armed 4x4s are fast and wily, the SAM pods are particularly devastating and the tanks are a hoot (and strong to boot). But you'll have the most fun in the air up there.

*Warhawk* is most definitely at its strongest in the sky. The Eucadians and the Chernovans each have a unique VTOL jet you can leap into any time for a spot of dogfighting. For the sake of clarity, the Eucadians have the titular *Warhawk* and the Chernovans have the *Nemesis* – which looks sleeker but has identical performance. They handle remarkably well. A tap of **A** will see your jet switch from hover to flight mode, and back again when desired. Hovering is well-suited to supporting ground troops below you, pumping rockets into fortresses and raking vehicles with chaingun rounds – although it does make you a tasty target, ripe for the plucking. An RPG-toting soldier or a lucky cannon shell

will make short work of you. Standard flight, however, is the only way to survive twisting dogfights high in the clouds. The left stick controls pitch and yaw, but the right stick controls special moves like barrel rolls and loops. With a combination of both the left and right stick you can actually pull off more complicated dogfighting manoeuvres like Immelmann turns and the Split S – swinging around behind pursuers before they know where you disappeared to. We found ourselves making liberal use of the right stick, flicking it around like a spider monkey on speed whenever we were being tracked.

The aircraft themselves can be controlled with the SIXAXIS' motion controls, a feat that has been pulled off to moderate aplomb before with *Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII*. Like the latter, the flight works fine with the SIXAXIS – but in the heat of combat it all feels a bit wishy-washy. We found the analogue controls far superior, as snapping the sticks around delivers a far greater and more direct sense of control – particularly for evasive manoeuvres and tricky pursuits. A shrill tone will sound if you're being painted, either from the ground or from an airborne opponent, and a bar on your HUD will show you how close the encroaching missiles are

to your sensitive afterburners. Weaving through the landscape can sometimes see tracking missiles thud into cliffs and crests, and double-pumping **L2** to light your 'burners is occasionally enough to out-accelerate missiles and shake off a lock. There are two countermeasures available to you, one in the form of a cloaking pick-up (which prevents missile lock) and the other a chaff pickup (a cloud of aluminium pieces to distract radar-guided missiles from their targets).

Other aerial pickups include floating mines, a charged bolt of electricity that sticks to targets, a cluster bomb for effective destruction of ground units, small homing missiles, large homing missiles and, the pièce de résistance, a hefty, self-guided warhead with a massive yield (see KING MISSILE).

#### BACK TO BASICS

*Warhawk* is a prime example of quality over quantity. Although we imagine much of this can be attributed to getting the game down to a reasonable size to aid easy downloading from the PSN, it does make for a remarkably refined product. There are only five maps, but each is exceedingly large. Intimate matches with fewer players can utilise smaller sections of the maps, but larger games and

#### KING MISSILE

Our favourite weapon by far is the self-guided missile. Launched from the air, the missile can be steered to any target you choose. The satisfaction in finding one of these bad boys, perching your jet in an out-of-the-way location, firing the missile and bringing it down on a group of unwary foot soldiers, or a tank, can't be underestimated. We even found that an exceptionally lucky shot from a soldier can destroy a missile mid-flight – but the odds are stacked against you and chances are it's going to hit you before you hit it. You choose to self-destruct the missile at any time during its flight, so destroying passing jets (or even other missiles) is entirely possible.



“Tighter than a bull’s arse on fight night and smoother than a glass of Guinness, *Warhawk* is a seriously superior piece of software.”

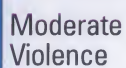




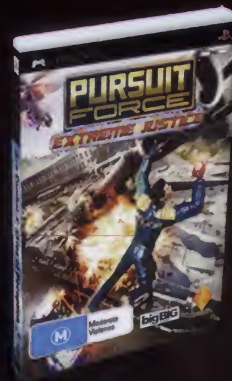
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dogfights can take advantage of the full scope of the immense levels. They're also vastly different. The Badlands is a dry, desert map characterised by red rock canyons, gulches and rocky outcrops. A large fortress lies in the middle, two half-ruined towns bookend the city on both sides and small strongholds dot the rest of the map. Destroyed Capitol is a filled with mostly empty air as it's set atop a number of skyscrapers. Some of

the buildings are linked, although the rest randomly poke out of the clouds and can only be reached with aircraft. Archipelago is made up of a handful of tall, towering islands that rise high out of the ocean. Just like The Badlands there's a large fortress in the centre, and smaller bases are scattered over the remaining island spires. Eucadia is filled with hills and countryside and peppered with destroyed villages and, lastly, the Island Outpost is a lush island with two large military bases at each end.

#### PROBLEMS?

Other than the total lack of any single-player to speak of (couldn't we have had some bots at least?), we have very few criticisms of *Warhawk* at all. It really is that good. If we had to clutch at straws we might be pressed to argue that firefights between soldiers slogging it out on the ground can get a little sloppy. Headshots aren't really as damaging as they perhaps ought to be, pistols do more damage to the skull than the assault rifle and the sniper rifle is an instant kill (even in, say, the foot). We also found *Warhawk* lacks a powerful close-range weapon, like a shotgun, to really dissuade other players from *always* charging at one another. A little more distinction between taking on someone two metres away and taking on someone 20 metres away (aside from the combat blade or the flamethrower) wouldn't have gone astray.

We'd even go so far as to suggest it seems like somewhat of a missed opportunity that, despite the fact four of the five levels are surrounded by water and have rivers snaking through them, there are no waterborne vehicles. An armed, ocean-going craft for each team would've added an interesting new dynamic to the combat, opening up a new mode of transport to enemy bases and some potentially neat sea stoushes. Also, with up to 32 players supported it would've been nice to be able to seat more than three players in a vehicle – a second, slower, dropship-type aircraft for each side could have been included to

get a small attacking force of half-a-dozen players around quickly.

Taking on tanks from the air is also a bit unbalanced because you can't get missile lock on ground vehicles – just turrets – but, honestly, now we're just splitting hairs. Just because improving a few token things we mentioned could make *Warhawk* better, not doing so does not make it poorer. *Warhawk* is a seriously good game and one of the best titles on PS3 thus far. Yes, it's multiplayer only and this harms its immediate appeal – you'll always need to rely on other people to play it. It is, however, the best

#### "IT BELONGS IN A MUSEUM!"



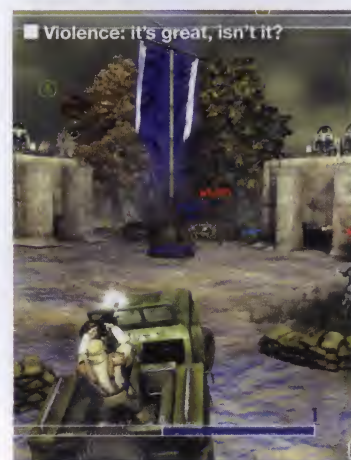
So, the Warhawk is some sort of weird, hovering, super-jet from the future, right? In other words, you'd be forgiven for assuming you'll never actually see a Warhawk zooming through the sky. You're probably right – but you may, however, be able to see one in a museum. The Curtiss P-40 Warhawk was actually a US single-engine, single-seat fighter plane used in great numbers during World War II. It was main fighter used by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) – although we dubbed it the Tomahawk (or Kittyhawk for later variants). 18 RAAF pilots became aces while flying P-40s. The more you know, huh? There's one at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. It's called Polly.

multiplayer game on PS3 – no question. The drop-in/drop-out nature of the deathmatches, the way the screen divides effortlessly into halves or quarters when friends join in mid-game – it's an absolutely watertight multiplayer experience, and its aerial shenanigans see it soar past *Resistance*, its only real rival in the non-tactical shooting stakes.

#### READ OUR LIPS: BUY WARHAWK

*Warhawk* is the kind of game split-screen was made for and, second to pornography, one of best uses of the

internet we can think of. Every time you play it, somewhere, someone is inventing a new flavour of ice cream and Chuck Norris is kicking a hippy. Each time you boot it up a litter of puppies are born and a young boy walks in on his older brother's girlfriend getting changed. *Warhawk* is one of those magical games that makes the world a better place. *Warhawk* isn't just a great game to play with friends; it's reason enough to have friends in the first place. You'd have to be barking mad to miss it. Acquire without delay. **Luke Reilly**



#### PROS:

- Furiously addictive
- Best multiplayer on PS3

#### CONS:

- No single-player
- Err...

**VERDICT:** Show us a better multiplayer game and we'll say you're wrong... and stupid.

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:

**09**



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M

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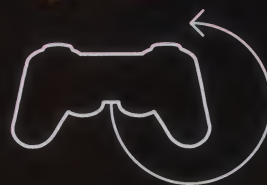
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PS3 PS2 PSP  
**REVIEW**

■ **GENRE:** ACTION RPG  
■ **RELEASE:** OCTOBER  
■ **DEVELOPER:** GAME REPUBLIC  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** SONY

■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
■ **PRICE:** \$99.95  
■ **HD:** 720p  
■ **WEB:** [www.us.playstation.com](http://www.us.playstation.com)

■ **BACK STORY:** As soon as some people see pixies, fairies, goblins and the like - they run. Not out of fear, it's just that on the pop cultural totem pole; fantasy geeks are dorkier than sci-fi nerds. The average fantasy geek makes a Trekkie look like Shaft.



# FOLKLORE

STOP! Don't keep turning, this is seriously cool!

There's been a veritable shower of big name, sweet titles that have dropped recently - *Warhawk*, *Stranglehold*, *Heavenly Sword* and *Stuntman: Ignition* to name but a few - so it'd be easy for a game like *Folklore* to slip through the cracks. And that would be a real shame because *Folklore* is the most enjoyable, original and surreal adventure/RPG we've seen.

What's so original about it?

First up you've got the gameplay. It looks like an RPG - to the untrained eye. So you expect the normal combo of sword and magic and that family favourite: turn-based combat. Nup, not

even close.

*Folklore* is... damn hard to put it words [Good thing you're not a writer then. Oh, hang on... Ed]. It kinda breaks down like this: two disparate characters, Ellen, a young woman who wants to know about her past and Keats, a writer for one of those wacky conspiracy magazines, are inexplicably drawn to an village in Ireland.

The Irish village, Doolin, is steeped in Celtic and Irish mythology - replete with a stone henge - not 'the' Stone Henge - and faeries (or "fairys") juxtaposing rather nicely with a spate of murders that have just occurred after these

PlayStation.  
Official Magazine  
**BRONZE AWARD**  
8/10







■ "EGON! DON'T CROSS THE STREAMS!"

## SOUL FISHING

It looks like he's caught a tiddler here, but other Id drags can last for minutes – not to mention be fraught with danger from the other folk around. This is some of the most ground breaking and easy-to-pick-up, not to mention just plain cool, SIXAXIS use we've ever seen.



... 'The dead go nowhere. These are a collection of memories of the deceased. They exist because the living remember them. Once the living forget them – they cease to be.' Wow. Does anyone else feel like eating ice cream and crying?"

outsiders entered. The very Anglo Saxon plot is told in a uniquely Japanese way (adding to the games overall originality) In short, *Folklore* feels like an animated movie that was drawn by Tim Burton and directed by David Lynch on a bucket load of Stilnox. In other words: weirder than a monkey singing Christmas carols. In a hat. A weird hat. You get the idea.

### LET'S JUST STEP BACK A BIT

Reviewing games is a hoot. There's the non-stop game playing, the sitting on the couch and there's the reviewer groupies (probably – we've yet to meet one), but it's an existence fraught with peril. For every *Heavenly Sword* you review there's a *Lair* waiting in the wings (excuse the pun). So when the big boss man hands you a title that no one's ever really heard of – like *Folklore* – for

reviewin', swear words can be said and cats kicked. Um... hypothetically.

### BACK TO THE FOLKLORE, YES?

The game starts rather slowly. Especially if you play both characters one after the other. Each character has their own unique way of putting the mystery together and really you don't fully finish the game until you've played through as both characters. However, as in most things we do, we focussed on the chick – enjoying Ellen's journey more (even though Keats has a rage gauge that turns him, briefly, into a remorseless bashing machine).

The play mechanic breaks down like this. At Doolin during the day it's pretty much just walking around talking to people (very RPGish). What you'll usually need to do is solve a fairly easy puzzle, receive an item and use said

item for entry into the Netherworld.

You see, once Doolin darkens it pays host to all manner of ghosts, ghoules and apparitions. Actually, it would more correct to say you are surrounded by the physical manifestations of the people that once lived in the village and simply by remembering them you are giving them form – but that kinda sounds pretentious and "ghosts" is a lot shorter.

The daytime Doolin is, well, a tad drab. But at night things are really jumping. A menagerie of creatures that look like they escaped from *The Nightmare Before Christmas* bop around the pub, offering odd jobs – but the real game is entering the Netherworld, the realm of Faeries. You even get to meet the faery king!

Wow, okay, none of that sounds remotely exciting. But it is.

Okay, trip off this homeboy: you're

Ellen, you've suddenly undergone a beautifully rendered transformation scene and you're now wearing a magic gown. You also have two 'folks'. No, not relations – folks are the various nasties you'll meet in your travails through the various realms. However, once you've beaten them up enough you can take their Ids (or soul, really) and use them as awesome spiritual weapons.

See *Folklore* doesn't have a kick or punch button – you simply assign an Id of each of the folks you've captured (there's lots in each level, and every level's different we might add – reaching about 100 folks altogether). So you could fling a goblin looking dude at someone, or press another button and the long-necked purple creature encases you in a shield.

It sounds weird but some of these folks are really useful, some are massive



and some are snorting powerhouses. The varying level of the folk's strength is most often matched in the way you take their Id. F'rinstance a wee sprite bobbing around and just annoying you will barely take a shake of the SIXAXIS. However if you come across, say, a giant, rock, robot man or a huge, hairy beast of doom - you're in for a session of soul fishing.

Sometimes you have to wait until your enemies soul turns red and then shake the SIXAXIS, sometimes you have to move the controller when the soul moves and stop when it stops.

This can lead to some really exciting SIXAXIS "soul-fishing" moments - with the added reward of you being able to do the massive attack moments before draining your own health gage.

#### IT'S NOT ALL SOUL-FISHING

Don't get us wrong, it's not all go/all action - all the time. Clues must be

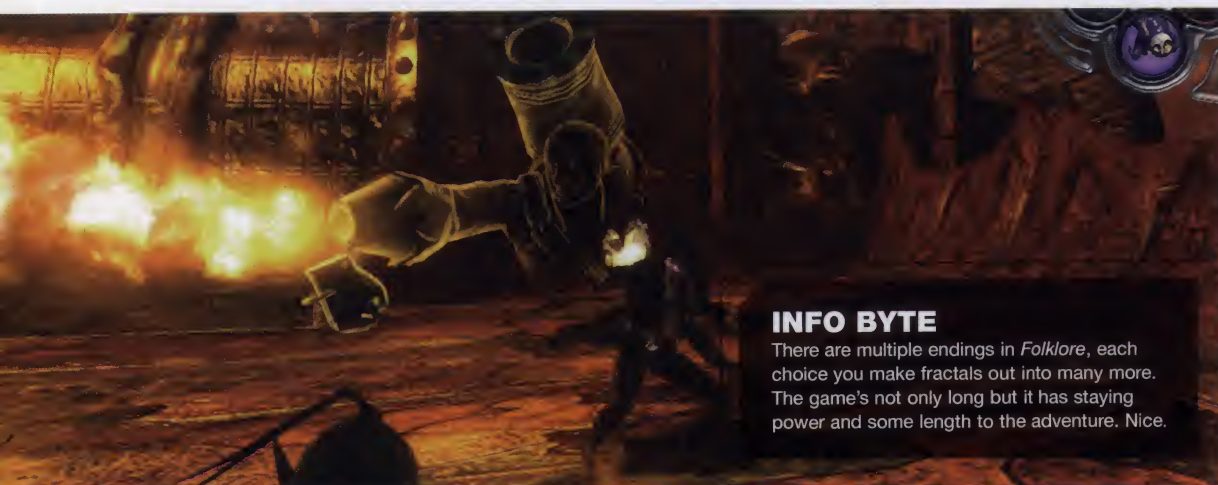
found, people talked to and frankly some mildly tedious guff to be performed during the day. It's never hard but it can be maddening when you just want to get to the next realm. And you will - each realm is unique with no repeated folks - which is damn impressive as there's dozens of the bastards! There's a typical fairy world, a war-themed world and a hell world in the mix. The game's smart as well - if the Id collecting didn't clue you in the explanation for the hell world is that human grief, guilt and weakness dreamt it up. That somehow our guilt had been made flesh. Pretty lofty concepts for any form of media really. It doesn't stop there. *Folklore* is all about the past's effect on the present. That's why Ellen and Keats go into the magic realms - they want answers from the dead. When asked if these really were dead souls, one of the creatures answered, "The dead go nowhere. These are a collection of

memories of the deceased. They exist because the living remember them. Once the living forget them - they cease to be."

Wow. Does anyone else feel like eating ice cream and crying?

#### OVERALL?

*Folklore* isn't going to be for everyone - it's pretty far out there. And if you want the best traditional RPG available to date, go with *Oblivion* - it's not even a contest. But if you want an odd, visually stunning and, above all, utterly original adventure, the likes of which you're not likely to run into again (unless there's a sequel) *Folklore* could well be an quest you'd like embark on. Featuring cool-looking beasts, an original plot and some pretty cool uses of the SIXAXIS controller (plus a very decent length adventure) this game is worth a whirl. A couple of camera niggles and repetition aside: *Folklore* is a very sweet surprise. **Anthony O'Connor**



#### INFO BYTE

There are multiple endings in *Folklore*, each choice you make fractals out into many more. The game's not only long but it has staying power and some length to the adventure. Nice.

■ A big tentacle horse; yep, this game is weird

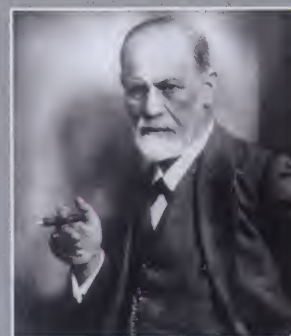


■ The enormous dog always got a little excited at dinner time...



#### THE FREUD DUDE!

Sigmund Freud came up with the concept of the Id, Ego and Super-Ego. He also did his body weight in cocaine and had a weird obsession with his mum and stuff shaped like doodles. It's doubtful he ever dreamed his philosophies would have ended up in *Folklore*. Then again he was a pretty trippy dude - maybe he did!



#### PROS:

- Original and surprising
- Some moments of genius

#### CONS:

- You prefer to blow things up
- You're waiting on *FFXIII*

**VERDICT:** Awesome graphics, memorable characters, a meaty plot - and a world that feels real.

OFFICIAL SCORE:

**08**



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■ **GENRE:** FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER  
 ■ **RELEASE:** NOVEMBER  
 ■ **DEVELOPER:** EALA  
 ■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA  
 ■ **PLAYERS:** 1-12  
 ■ **PRICE:** \$99.95  
 ■ **HD:** 720p  
 ■ **WEB:** www.ea.com/moh

■ **BACK STORY:** The *Medal of Honor* series began in fine form back in 1999 on PlayStation with the release of *Medal of Honor*, and on PS2 with the brilliant *Medal of Honor Frontline*. Since then the franchise struggled: can *Airborne* reverse the trend?

## INFO BYTE

*Airborne's* rousing score is actually one of the best things about the game. Composed by award-winning muso Michael Giacchino it's a slightly more foreboding twist on the familiar *Medal of Honor* theme. Giacchino composed the score for the original *Medal of Honor* and the original *Call of Duty*, TV's *Lost* and films like *The Incredibles* and *Ratatouille*.

# MEDAL OF HONOR AIRBORNE

A giant leap or a fall from grace?

**M**edal of Honor *Airborne* was supposed to be the game that perched EA's stalwart series back on top of the heap and gave fans the ultimate WWII experience they've been craving for.

But it's not.

### MIND THE STEP...

Our first peek at *Airborne* in April 2006 promised so much. The final game delivers very little. The gimmick is you control the jump – to a degree.

Missions in *Airborne* have no specific start point, and you can tackle the objectives in whatever order you wish. You jump from the plane every time you die, even after checkpoints, which seems like a superficial way of utilising the drop more than the six missions would normally allow. Pre-determined drop zones are marked with green smoke – here you'll find Allied chums to fight alongside you. You can, however, steer straight into Nazi strongholds – although doing so is usually a death sentence. The problem is that the drop becomes a bit of a chore. It

makes for a neat delivery mechanic, and nailing a greased landing is essential, but focusing so heavily on it really is making a mountain out of a molehill.

The other gimmick is weapon customisation. Weapon upgrades are earned with use – sprees and multiple kills with certain weapons earn bonus additions. The Thompson, for instance, can be modified with a pistol grip (for added accuracy) and a Cutts compensator (to eject gas upwards and negate muzzle rise) and a drum magazine (for more rounds). However,

■ "What are you just standing there for? So You Think You Can Dance starts in 10 MINUTES!"



■ "What are all those things those guys have? Those floaty things?" said the soon to be dead soldier

■ "I'm going out for some fresh air guys," said the blind soldier. "Phew, it sure is windy out here..."

■ "We all fall down!" The soldiers' game of 'Ring a Ring O'Roses' ended in tragedy after Edgar brought a gun into play

## "Our first peek at *Medal of Honor Airborne* promised so much. The final game delivers very little..."

there's nothing personal about these upgrades – they're arbitrarily applied the moment they're unlocked, mid-fire-fight. If you discard it mid-mission and grab a unmodified one from the ground later all your upgrades are applied. It's all a little brainless and unrealistic.

### WIDE OF THE MARK

The *Medal of Honor* series has become notoriously for exceptionally dopey AI, but *Airborne* does show some noticeable improvement in this area. With Affordance AI, enemies are able to evaluate your attacks and react accordingly – they usually won't stand still if they catch you aiming at them and they tend to make use of features that give them a tactical advantage, like high ground, trenches, cover and doorways. The biggest difference this makes is that, unlike *Medal of Honor* games of yesteryear, *Airborne*'s Nazis fall back when they're out of options. While it's an improvement however, it's far from perfect. We found they still suffer from the odd blind spot – sometimes nearby Krauts don't see you, despite the fact you're in an unconcealed position. One German officer didn't notice he'd been struck in the bonce with a stick grenade. He just sat behind his upturned desk until he unceremoniously exploded.

Unfortunately, there are plenty of other complaints and many of our usual *Medal*

of *Honor* enemy woes have returned. It's still relatively bloodless, a mentality that flies in the face of realism. It still takes an inordinate amount of ordinance to take the bastards down. Headshots remain an instant kill but *Airborne* still retains that annoying habit of enemies being able to absorb way too many bullets. It really is incredibly frustrating learning you need to plug jackbooting Jerries at least twice in the chest with your M1 before they take a dirt nap, or that you need to empty half a magazine into their bellies before they'll so much as stumble. Environmental damage is non-existent – you can still hide behind crates without fear of being shredded by the MG42 nest up the way. There's also no quick grenade toss button – you need to change to it, chuck it and change back. *Airborne* is also guilty of some lazy mission objectives – at one point we needed to collect a bazooka (which had inexplicably been dropped in four pieces in four DIFFERENT PODS) and destroy a Tiger tank. We couldn't, of course, sneak up on the tank, mantle it and drop a

grenade down the hatch.

The biggest disappointment is the visuals, which vary from workmanlike to downright horrible. Disappearing bodies and vanishing parachutes do nothing to make you feel like you're really there.

*Medal of Honor* may have paved the road for a tidal wave of WWII-themed first-person shooters, but it lost the ability to compete with its peers a long time ago. The problem with *Medal of Honor* is that it has all but lost its original focus. It used to be about subterfuge, sabotage and sneaking into bars with false papers. Now it's almost strictly about frontline combat, but everyone else is doing that better. The parachuting approach is clever, but the combat itself is plain and woefully short-lived. It does more right than it does wrong, but the overall package is underdone. A staunch refusal to evolve, a paint-by-numbers campaign and some sub-par visuals make *Airborne* an unnecessary purchase. There's life in WWII yet, just wait for *Brothers in Arms Hell's Highway* instead. **— Luke Reilly**

### PROS:

- Jumping out of C47s is cool
- The AI has improved

### CONS:

- Short, lacks any real innovation
- Too many problems

**VERDICT:** Should have been the game that turned the *Medal of Honor* series around, but it isn't.

### BELIEVE IT OR NOT

The very first bomb dropped by the Allies on Berlin during WWII sadly killed the only elephant in the Berlin Zoo.

A German U-boat was sunk by a truck when an explosion on a merchant ship it just torpedoed shot the truck into the air, landing on the surfacing sub.

At the time of Pearl Harbour the US Navy command was called CINCUS (pronounced "sink us").

Before it went to war, the shoulder patch of the US Army's 45th Infantry division was actually a swastika.

The Russians destroyed over 500 German aircraft by ramming them in mid-air. They also sometimes cleared mine fields by marching over them.

24 US and Canadian servicemen were shot dead during the invasion of the Pacific island of Kiska even though the Japanese had already left the island.



OFFICIAL  
SCORE:  
**06**



■ **GENRE:** RACING  
■ **RELEASE:** OCTOBER  
■ **DEVELOPER:** JUICE GAMES  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** THQ

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-8  
■ **PRICE:** \$109.95  
■ **HD:** 720p  
■ **WEB:** www.juicegames.com

■ **BACK STORY:** There were actually two versions of the original *Juiced*. One was by publisher Acclaim that was finished but never saw the light of day and the second was by new publisher THQ who came to the game's rescue.

### INFO BYTE

Ursula Hayes has a ravenous body that'd cause a pile up on a footpath. That said, we have reason to believe the just-turned 28-year-old model may be a mother. Talk about a yummy mummy.



■ More bloody cars? Will this captioning nightmare ever end?

## JUICED 2: HOT IMPORT NIGHTS

OPS will pimp out a hot import any night of the week...

**A**rcade rats will get a bit of a kick out of this fizzy muffer – particularly if their current mantelpiece pin-up shows more body tit than bosom. Mixing rivers of nitrous with underground street racing and the ability to pimp your ride from bonnet to steering wheel, *Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights* is a hip pop turbo guzzler out to split the speedometer needle. If you're a casual fan that likes fast cars, fast women, and fast satisfaction, this is good news. Driving-gameaholics who've played every racer released since the original *Outrun* won't be as impressed, however, as for all its sheen, *Juiced 2* lacks a bit of ambition. It doesn't plant its feet firmly enough on either side of the simulator-arcade divide so doesn't man up to stretch the genre one way or the other.

That's not to say *Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights* isn't a blast to play – it is. Slipping into the game's hot seat, players work their way through a series of increasingly rougher leagues of street racing. You'll start out in the rookie class that keeps the

training wheels on before moving through seven increasingly tougher leagues. The intensity of the first couple of hours is up there with an aerobics class at a nursing home, but the game starts to rev its engine when you hit the fifth or sixth league and you've bought a fully sic Nissan Skyline R34 GT-R with phat nitrous to take on fellow racers, with names like Keiko Miyama and Leon Tyrell.

Like *Ridge Racer*, *Juiced 2: HIN* is all about bustling about with other cars while sliding around corners to build up race-winning nitrous. Imagine skinning

the tarmac around a narrow hairpin, a bogey scratching your rear bumper, another hostile jostling at your side, before you smash the nitrous release valve to rocket out of the corner and pass a flock of cars on the inside to take the lead. Booyakasha! It hits the spot. The controls work brilliantly once you get used to them and the variety of views you can race from, including an in-car perspective, add to atmosphere. It's hyper real, baby, and it's there to be loved.

What's more, it looks quite swank – better than *Need for Speed Carbon* in



It's speeding, it's not big, and it's not clever. It is, however, extremely cool...



■ This guy may be famous, but he has a crappy beard: unforgivable

SELECT CELEBRITY DNA  
ON BIO DIESEL

Samuel Hubinelle

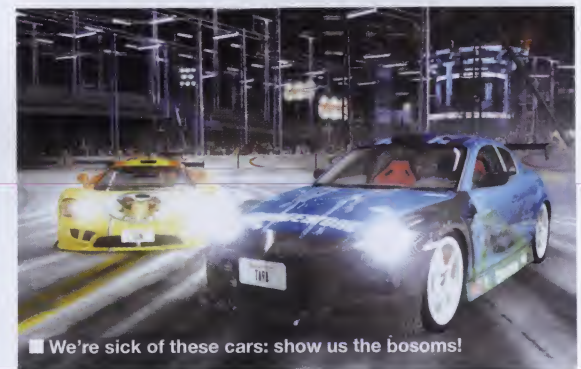
Djibril Cissé

Smudo

Phil Morrison

Caballero





## “... gamers that just want a flashy mix of racing bliss can safely go out and buy *Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights*.”

any case. *Juiced 2* does the whole “shaky nitro camera thang” as well as any cat on the circuit, and its car models look practically real on the starting grid, despite some strange fuzziness creeping onto them mid race. Most of the time you’ll have your peepers glued to the tracks anyway, all of which are packed to the brim with flapping spectators, reflective roads and ambient lights.

What’s more the car customisation owns the roost. Take any vehicle available, spray paint it neon pink if you’d like, add all manner of Zeus-like thunderbolts, fiery phoenix wings, racing stripes, twists, and other tattoos, before or after you’ve decked it out with kit parts from a bunch of licensed manufacturers. Then there’s the decal system that allows you to actually put chest heavy hotties on the side of your car. We’d prefer them “in” the car, but we’ll take whatever we can get.

So why, with all this goodness, is *Juiced 2: HIN* not for all? In business a popular mantra is to keep your core message succinct and relevant. It’s how both your customers and your employees know what you’re on about as a company, and dictates strategy, mood, manner, procedure – everything. Applying

that to games in the contemporary age has never been more necessary. *Gran Turismo* is “the real driving simulator”. Burnout is about high-speed carnage. *V8 Supercars* emulates idiosyncratic touring car driving. The descriptions are curt and focused. *Juiced 2: HIN*, on the other hand, is a street racing game that puts you in the shoes of a heavy footed racer that’s into the culture enough to pimp the outside of his car but not have a clue about how to tune it up. It’s also about driving at ridiculous speeds fast enough to give you the runs, but not so fast as to cause much damage or require any skill to control. It’s got fingers in lots of oil tanks, and the black gold is running everywhere. In short, it’s a jack of all trades.

In trying to spread the net as wide as possible, it hasn’t focused and expanded on any one interesting gameplay mechanic, leaving the game feeling a tad

generic. Drifting is fun, but is less involved than that seen in launch title *Ridgeracer 7*. Spooking, the act of tailgating an opponent ‘til they spin out, is cool and so too the pre-race gambling and DNA programming that allows you to record your play style and send it to a friend, but they feel like croutons in the soup. Juice Games needed to pick one gameplay element and take it to the extreme with all the customisation, nitrous, and other bits and pieces in hot support to really carve out a podium position.

Regardless, indifferent gamers that just want a flashy fix of racing bliss can safely go out and buy *Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights*. It’s a high budget, quality title that’ll be out before *Need for Speed Pro Street* and *Burnout Paradise*. If you only have time for the kings of the road on the other hand, you’ll have to wait a bit longer. **James Ellis**

### PROS:

- Easy to get into
- Looks hot and drives hotter

### CONS:

- Not the deepest game
- Jack of all trades

**VERDICT:** A top bit of racing fluff packed with a heap of glossy options and stout mechanics.

### DRIFTING ALL OVER THE WORLD

Sydney is in *Juiced 2*, but not as you know it. Apart from standard street racing, the other major mode of play is the Drifting comps. Here it’s all about travelling sideways for as long as possible within your drifts without smashing into a wall. It’s bloody hard, but gets easier with practise and better cars. Getting all creative the devs have designed drifting tracks around the Sydney Opera House, France’s Eiffel Tower and Rome’s Coliseum to name but a few. And, of course, you can take all this lateral action online for multiplayer high jinks.



OFFICIAL  
SCORE:  
**07**



■ **GENRE:** RACING  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **DEVELOPER:** SEGA DRIVING STUDIO  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** SEGA

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-6  
■ **PRICE:** \$99.95  
■ **HD:** 720p  
■ **WEB:** <http://rally.sega-europe.com>

■ **BACK STORY:** The original *Sega Rally* was developed on the Sega Model 2 board by AM5. A little known bit of trivia is that some of the development staff at AM5 actually came from Namco where they helped create the original *Ridge Racer*.



# SEGA RALLY

Has *Sega Rally* got the grunt to leave *DIRT* choking on its dust?

There's no denying it; 1995 was a fantastic year for excited young arcade rats. After successfully luring thousands of children into early gaming addiction with *Daytona-aaaa* Sega then decided to unleash *Sega Rally* on unsuspecting punters. It was a revolutionary racer that featured different track surfaces that actually affected the handling physics of the car. Between the combined might of *Daytona* and *Sega Rally* people were defenceless; lunch money vanished causing the great canteen crash of '95, and thousands of ten-pin bowling tournaments were destroyed because half of the competitors were busy getting in one more lap. Then nothing much changed life-wise; time passed, an

okay sequel appeared, boys grew into man-children, and legend passed into myth – until today.

It's truly ridiculous what twelve years has done to graphics technology. Instead of crude boxes bouncing along on four octagons, *Sega Rally* features sumptuously sculpted rally machines that arguably look sweeter than they do in real life. Similarly the environments are a postcard photographer's wet dream – full of high-def picture-perfect environments brimming with minute attention to detail. The tracks are also packed with the classic *Sega Rally* fixtures; clamouring spectators, paparazzi helicopters and curious herds of zebra. But the thing that really stands out amidst all this spectacle is how sloppy the visuals

"It's about barrelling around at top speed, while hanging out more arse than your local plumber."





have gotten – and we mean that in the best possible way.

Essentially, *Sega Rally* is like a honeymoon; you travel to beautiful locations just to get down and dirty. It achieves this feel with an impressive deformable track system that shows *MotorStorm* how to do things. Cutting a swathe through the course cakes your car with unique spatters of particle-based mud and, while a dip through a water hazard may remove some crud encrusting your ride, those trenches your tires dug on that last hairpin will haunt you on the next lap. The ruts you create aren't just visual trickery this time; it's actually altering the tracks surface geometry which can negatively affect your lap times. But unlike *MotorStorm* you never get that "bogged down" feeling, which is great because *Sega Rally* is all about the velocity.

#### REVO, IS NOT A DIRTY WORD...

Unlike *DIRT* and more technical rally games that punish you harshly for your imperfections; *Sega Rally* is a pure arcade romp about barrelling around at top speed, while hanging out more arse than your local plumber. The modes on offer include the self explanatory championship, quick race, and time attack options – plus it includes rear, front, and four-wheel drive cars, a tuning option for on or off road setups, and the courses offer varied terrain types; dirt, snow, mud, road and jungle. It's true that the different drive-trains and surfaces do add some depth to the experience, but you won't have to radically adjust your driving approach

to compensate for the change. Also, this game rocks if you're using a force feedback steering wheel.

The audio too stays true to the familiar *Sega Rally* formula. Throughout the experience you're serenaded by some patented cock rock guitar, but disappointingly a remix of the famous "Game Over Yeeeahhh" song is absent. The cars have meaty engine notes and you're also treated to atmospheric ambience, whether it's growling tigers, the toll of distant church bells or the wolf whistling of your fans. Nostalgaholics will be pleased to know that everyone's favourite cryptic co-driver makes a triumphant return. "Deadly jump! ...maybe."

While the single-player is a blast it doesn't contain a 10-year career mode like the last *Sega Rally* had, so it won't take long to clock – which is where the multiplayer option comes in handy. Offering six-player competitions online and two-player split-screen it accurately recreates the madcap multiplayer antics of the original arcade experience. Uploading of lap times has been included too, so you can happily spend hours trying to shave .36 of a second off your mate's seemingly perfect lap. Bear in mind that repeated attempts can actually harm your chances due to sloppy seconds caused by deformed tracks.

#### RALLY RENOVATION RESCUE

While the arcadey experience is fun for a while, the honeymoon is over pretty quickly. Certain things may still irritate you even if you've got your "arcade hat" on;

#### RALLY BIG SELECTION

*Sega Rally Revo* includes 34 different cars for you to repaint brown. Each ride has multiple liveries to unlock and they're broken up into the following classes.

**-Premier:** Features current rally super machines like the Lancer Evo IX, Impreza STI and the Citroën Xsara.  
**-Modified:** Features stock cars modified for rallying like the Peugeot 206, Skoda Octavia and the VW Golf.  
**-Master:** Features historical greats like the Ford Escort, the faithful Celica and the inimitable Lancia Delta.  
 They've also included "wacky unlockable bonus cars" and fans should know that the Lancia Stratos makes a return and is as unwieldy as ever...

your opponents get a miraculous start off the line, there's limited car damage, and there's a chaperoning invisible barrier that keeps you from smashing off course. To appreciate *Sega Rally* you'll have to continually remind yourself that it's a deceptively life-like caricature of a hardcore rallying experience, and even though the speed of the game is sensationally addictive, you may find yourself missing some of the interaction and depth that other titles provide. This being said they should have nicknamed it *Sega Rally*

'*Reno*', because while the locales are new and it's had a significant visual renovation, it isn't quite a gameplay revolution.

But if you do harbour fond memories of your misspent youth, have some extra cash, and are still hang out with the lads from the old bowling team; hook up some wheels, select split-screen or get online and let the good times roll. It's not brain surgery but it delivers the fun in big muddy spades. *Sega Rally 'Revo'* gives you that same ol' feeling of the original, just not too much more. **Adam Mathew**

#### PROS:

- Slick visuals, deformable terrain
- Familiar old school arcade fun

#### CONS:

- Single-player doesn't last long
- "Game over yeeeahhh" absent

**OFFICIAL  
SCORE:  
07**

**VERDICT:** Not so much a revolution as one hell of a good renovation.

"[it's] like a honeymoon; you travel to beautiful locations just to get down and dirty."



■ What do you call a sheep with no legs? A cloud



■ What's long, green and smells like pork? Kermit the Frog's finger. That's all, we're here all week folks!



■ **GENRE:** SPORTS  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **DEVELOPER:** EA BLACK BOX  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-6  
■ **PRICE:** \$109.95  
■ **HD:** 720p  
■ **WEB:** www.ea.com

■ **BACK STORY:** The *Tony Hawk* franchise single-handedly re-invented, then dominated, the skating genre – pretty much unopposed. Until now. With *SKATE*, EA looks set to redefine skating for the next gen.

# SKATE

The king is dead... long live the king...

**O**kay, before we start this review we'd like to get an enormous monkey off our backs. We'd like to announce something that we know you're all anxious to hear, just so we can get on with the business of telling you just how awesome this game actually is. So here it is people, listen closely because we'll say it only once: yes, *SKATE* is superior to *Tony Hawk*.

That's not to say that the upcoming *Tony Hawk's Proving Ground* won't potentially surpass EA's skating sim, or an attempt to taint what is one of the top franchises in videogames to date, nor is it an attempt at hyperbole. *SKATE* is simply the best skating game on the market by a very long stretch. In fact, as it stands right now, on next gen consoles it's quite possibly the best sports game, period.

While most skating games (and snowboarding games, and surfing games, and... well, you get the picture) seem completely content to tweak and refine a system that was devised almost 10 years ago, *SKATE* reinvents the wheel, taking the whole idea of how skating is represented in videogames and rebuilding it from the ground up.

## FLICKIN' AWESOME

You've probably heard about the 'flick it' system, been intrigued by the whole concept, then thought, hmm... sounds interesting, but complicated and needlessly twitchy. On that count you would be completely and utterly wrong. While it takes roughly five or ten minutes to get properly acquainted (and to stop pressing **X** to ollie) after that initial learning curve the controls will seem so natural that you'll wonder why no-one implemented such a creative, intuitive system beforehand.

The whole thing just feels right, for many reasons. The realistic physics help render the skating so real that even landing your first kickflip will feel rewarding. That sense of improvement, of learning new tricks and perfecting them is the hook that makes real skating so addictive, and it's replicated brilliantly here. In the beginning learning to ollie is ridiculously fun, but landing your first Christ air will make you giggle like a Japanese schoolgirl, and possibly wet your frilly underpants.

Part of this enjoyment is undoubtedly due to the fact that the controls are mapped to the controller so perfectly. A simple down and up flick of the right stick will cause you to ollie, and conversely an up and down flick will enable you to nollie; push down, then flick to the right and your player will perform a kickflip. Makes sense doesn't it? It almost seems to replicate the actual movement required in real skating. This sense of reality is

compounded by the fact that moving the right stick in different directions is represented visually by the position your character's feet take on the board. Real skaters will testify to the fact that these footings actually correspond correctly as per the trick you are preparing to attempt. This realism just adds to the experience; the depth involved in merely landing a trick is simply breathtaking.

And this visual flair expands itself to every aspect of *SKATE*, anyone who's ever graced a board will instantly recognise the sound of wheels against concrete, trucks hitting rail, the sharp squeak of a powerslide. The downright accuracy of each and every little sound a board makes will warm the cockles of any true skater's heart. Guaranteed.

Every aspect of the game is authentic. The game world, a combination of San Francisco, Barcelona, and Vancouver (titled San Vanelona), despite being enormous, still manages to hide small skatable nooks and crannies in amongst the traditional skate parks you would expect from such a sim. The variations in the environments also allow for multiple different skating experiences. Fancy high tailing it down steep San Fran-esque hills? Check. Like the idea of finding decent gaps in amongst the business district? You're totally covered. *SKATE* really succeeds in providing the definitive skating sim, wrapped up in a package that is so fun to simply pick up and play.

What else? Well, the level of customisation available to you and your custom skater is in-depth and accessible, with choices such as wheel types and trucks making an actual difference in your skating experience. And the video editor is worth way more than the simple footnote mention we're going to give it here, as does the fact that you

PlayStation  
**SILVER AWARD**  
9/10

■ "That's not flying... that's falling with style..."

■ We could do this if we wanted to (Disclaimer: we totally could not do this, even if we wanted to)







■ The skateboard remake of *Bullitt* was doomed from the start



■ This looks like it's almost *hovering* in mid-air (we want hoverboards so bad we start imagining things...)



## INFO BYTE

Danny Way is the only pro to win the prestigious *Thrasher Magazine Skater of the Year* twice.



■ Is this guy wearing a cardigan? That's totally *not* cool...

## INSANITY

Featured pro skater Danny Way has pulled off some crazy shit in his time. Check out some of his most insane stunts...

### GREAT WALL

Yep, your eyes are not deceiving you, Danny Way did jump the great wall of China on a skateboard. Oh, and that's him to your left.



### HUGE AIR

Danny Way also holds the record for biggest air, using the world famous 'Megaramp' that he himself commissioned. The height to beat? Almost 24 feet...



### BOMB DROP

And this is Danny Way breaking the world record for highest bomb drop, dropping in from an insane 20 feet... Yes, Danny Way is legitimately insane.



can upload your favourite highlight reels to the internet for the viewing pleasure of other *SKATE* fans.

### THE PERFECT 10?

Well, not exactly. Sadly there are a couple of flaws that hinder *SKATE*'s quest for sports perfection, mostly fennickety things that seem insignificant, yet have the potential to frustrate at certain, pivotal moments. The most visible of these is the inability to actually get off your board and walk. We fully understand that EA designed *SKATE* to specifically avoid the ridiculously protracted platforming segments that have plagued more recent

iterations of *Tony Hawk*'s, but in such a free flowing skating environment, it would have been nice to be able to climb up to certain points, or quickly trot up some stairs, as opposed to clumsily skating there, bumping into kerbs and the like.

But that's about it, aside from some lengthy loading times *SKATE* is a fluid, well-balanced masterpiece that is simply a joy to play. The rulebook has been torn up and rewritten to the extent that it's almost impossible to go back and play any other extreme sports game in existence. The gauntlet has been thrown down, and at this point it's difficult to see how the much-vaunted competition can out-skate *SKATE*. **Mark Serrels**

"...anyone who's ever graced a board will instantly recognise the sound of wheels against concrete, trucks hitting rail, the sharp squeak of a powerslide."

### PROS:

- Ingenious trick mechanic
- The definitive skating sim

### CONS:

- Can't get off your board
- Could be easier to navigate

**VERDICT:** A groundbreaking experience that resets the bar for sport games in general.

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:  
**09**



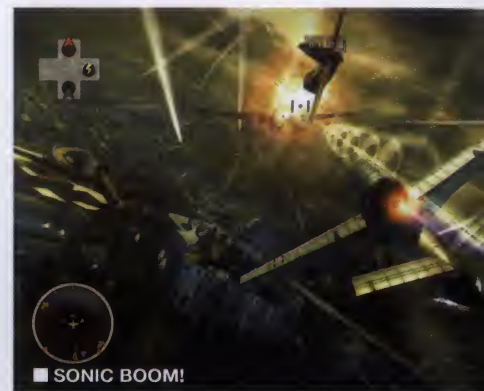
■ **GENRE:** FLIGHT SIM  
■ **RELEASE:** OCTOBER 2007  
■ **DEVELOPER:** UBISOFT ROMANIA  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-16  
■ **PRICE:** \$119.95  
■ **HD:** 720p  
■ **WEB:** [www.blazing-angels2.com](http://www.blazing-angels2.com)

■ **BACK STORY:** Developed out of Romania, *Blazing Angels* is Ubisoft's World War II combat flight sim. With the original a decent enough title with a few rough edges, have Ubisoft managed to refine the formula for the sequel in the meantime?

### INFO BYTE

Like their enemy, the Allies were just discovering jet-powered aircraft at the close of World War II. While the Meteor F3 saw some flight time in the conflict, its main role was intercepting V1 missiles over English soil.



# BLAZING ANGELS II: SECRET MISSIONS OF WWII

Bally ten-penny ones dropping in the custard! Charlie Choppers chucking a handful!

**I**t doesn't feel like that long since we went wheels-up with *Blazing Angels*, and the truth is, it wasn't. With the local release of the PS3 pushed back to March, it'll only be about six months between instalments. While the single player aspect of *Blazing Angels* was shallow, the 16-player multiplayer provided some sweet dogfighting action between games of *MotorStorm* and *Resistance*. But with the PS3 library filling out the stakes are higher these days. Does *Blazing Angels II* have the right stuff or is the series going down in flames?

### SMOKE ME A KIPPER

*Blazing Angels II* puts you in command

of a top secret Allied squad of the greatest pilots of World War II. Your team is sent on all of the classified missions that are too dangerous for lesser pilots to take, but you'll also have access to all the cutting edge aviation technology that the world didn't know about – jet-powered aircraft, heat-seeking missiles and more. To flesh out the storyline, a series of repainted stills with voice overs plays between missions, in a style that is reminiscent of a '40s comic book. While the voice acting is of a high standard, the scripting's cheesier than an episode of *Hogan's Heroes*, which does detract a bit from the atmosphere.

One major improvement since the

first game is the number of planes available, expanded to just over 50 aircraft. Everything from tiny bugmasher biplanes to hulking rocket-powered 'flying wing' craft (reminiscent of a modern B2 bomber) are flyable, as well as the classics like the Spitfire and the P-38 Lightning. The remarkable thing about the *Blazing Angels* games is that the aircraft featured, as ridiculous as they may seem, were actually around in World War II, even if some of them didn't get past prototype status. Not all aircraft are available from the get-go and the planes that are unlocked as you progress depend on your performance, so only dedicated air aces will see the whole squadron. For

further customisability, you can modify the appearance of your aircraft, and fly the plane of your choice on each sortie, provided it meets the mission specifications (i.e. bombers for bombing missions, and so on).

For some extra firepower and utility on your missions, you once again have up to three wingmen to command, which are handled flawlessly by a few jabs of the d-pad. As with the original *BA*, your three wingmen have their own special abilities that include things like repairs, shaking bogeys from your tail (not as kinky as it sounds) and just straight out offence. However, this time around, rather than being one-shot abilities, they operate off





“As much as we love parking our plane on a Parisian street while some hungry Frenchman grabs a fresh baguette, we’d much rather be back in the sky...”

a ‘super bar’, and can be used multiple times during a mission.

#### FEATHERED BACK ON HIS SAMMY

Visually, *Blazing Angels II* has its pros and cons. The actual aircraft are fantastically realised down to minute details. Many of the effects are great, like the weather, clouds, smoke and lighting, and the draw distance is particularly impressive. The downside is, that to work on that kind of scale, sacrifices had to be made. When you fly near the ground, you can see that the terrain and buildings are constructed with basic models and low-res texturing. It’s an understandable design decision, and when you’re whipping past the scenery at a rate of knots you’re not likely to notice, but under close inspection, you can’t help but feel it looks a bit like a large-scale PS2 game rather than a fully fledged next-gen outing.

The single player campaign gives you a good variety of objectives and theatres of war, and while reducing Stukas to scrap metal and blowing up German supply depots is where it’s at, some attempts to broaden the gameplay

aren’t so great. While they probably are the material for military decoration, some of the mission objectives are a little ridiculous, and quite frankly, not a lot of fun. As much as we love parking our plane on a Parisian street while some hungry Frenchman grabs a fresh baguette, we’d much rather be back in the sky shooting down ‘cabbage crates’ (German fighters, for those not up to spec on their RAF banter).

Fortunately, any shortfalls in the single player game are compensated for by the range of multiplayer options. As well as being able to play through the campaign co-operatively, there are a broad spectrum of options for two to sixteen players, from basic dogfights and skirmishes to objective based play and capture-the-flag. The only real issue with *Blazing Angels*

II’s multiplayer is that it’ll basically be competing for players in the wake of the outstanding *Warhawk*, and considering that Sony’s juggernaut offers air and land combat, and can support twice as many players in simultaneous action, it could prove to be a hard act to follow.

#### WHAT-HO! SMASHING?

While the game expands on its predecessor and certainly ups the ante to boot, it also falls foul of many of the faults that plagued the original game. If you’re hungry for some dogfighting and can get a bit of multiplayer happening, *Blazing Angels II* will be right up your alley without a doubt. If you’re after an engrossing single player campaign, however, you’d be well advised to take your flight suit elsewhere. **Nick O’Shea**

#### PROS:

- Solid flight mechanics
- Variety of multiplayer options

#### CONS:

- Devoid of character
- *Warhawk*, anyone?

**VERDICT:** At this stage of the PS3’s life, *Blazing Angels II* is not quite the ace of aces.

#### GOTT IN HIMMEL! MEIN KNACKWURST!

While *Blazing Angels II* is a work of fiction, there actually is some truth behind the concept. In the latter part of World War II, German engineers actually managed to manufacture a number of jet aircraft that potentially could have wrested control of the skies from the Allied bombing formations. However, with turbine technology in its infancy and a lack of resources, the few Axis jets that were in the air were notoriously unreliable and didn’t end up making a significant impact before Allied ground troops swept across the whole of Germany.



OFFICIAL  
SCORE:  
**06**

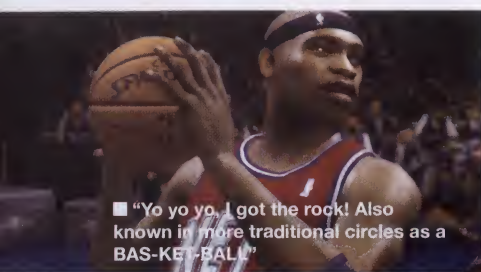


# PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **GENRE:** SPORTS  
■ **RELEASE:** OCTOBER  
■ **DEVELOPER:** EA CANADA  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-6  
■ **PRICE:** \$99.95  
■ **HD:** 720p  
■ **WEB:** www.ea.com

■ **BACK STORY:** The *NBA LIVE* franchise was the dominant force in video game basketball until Sega Sports came along with its 2K series and snuffed out EA's lead. The franchise now belongs to 2K Sports, a subsidiary of Take 2 Interactive.



■ "Yo yo yo, I got the rock! Also known in more traditional circles as a BAS-KET-BALL!"



■ Don't do drugs: this guy actually missed from this distance...

## INFO BYTE

Gilbert Arenas is the cover boy for *NBA LIVE 08*. "This is a dream come true," said Arenas. "I'm a huge gamer and have been playing *NBA LIVE* since 1995. I never imagined that I would see my face on the cover of an EA Sports videogame."



■ Is Yao Ming taking a dump, or defying gravity? Either way, some crazy shit's about to go down...



# NBA LIVE 08

"From downwwwnnnn towwwwnnnn..."

PlayStation.  
BRONZE  
AWARD  
8/10

This is the one to buy if you're yet to nab a ball tosser for the PS3. While 2K Sports has pounded EA in the paint for the last several seasons, the poundee has finally countered by ditching their trademark gimmicky kitsch for a bowl of burly meat-and-potato 5-on-5. There's no 'Photograph Your Dog's Head and Stick it on a Pro' mode, no 'Bang an Underage Cheerleader and Hire a Good Lawyer' mini game – nope, it's just 'the game'. Passing, shooting, guarding, blocking – even dribbling – have been given prime attention in the tune up shop and the result is a game that's easy to pick up and play, but still boasts plenty of depth for fans that count NBA playbooks as 'real page turners'.

Like with Konami's *Pro Evolution Soccer*, *LIVE 08* just feels credible. Shots

go in when they look as though they should, blocks are parried as expected, crossovers work on over zealous defenders. Everything is in its right place – the grill of basketball games. In 2K Sports *NBA 2K7*, on the other hand, players had to endure wave after wave of missed open shots, dodgy intercepts, rough passes, and some lagging controls. It was possible to tinker with the sliders to improve some of these problems, but it was a massive pain in the arse. *LIVE 08* works well out of the packet.

And, hot diggity damn, if it isn't the most dapper rookie on the court. While Dirk Nowitzki has previously had a head like a bullet-holed block of cheese, he now looks identical to his lumbering insipid self. The other infamous big man, Shaq "ring smasher" O'Neal, too looks

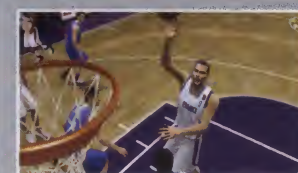
legit, (despite looking as though he may have sniffed down an entire glue stick before taking to the court). Combine this bunch of good heads with animation smoother than your granddaddy's vintage red, and you have the booming sights and sweat of the NBA on your screen.

It's just as well, as there's a lot to play through here. The focus may have been on tweaking the core gameplay to be tighter than Jessica Biel's buttocks, but EA aren't daft enough to leave out some substantive modes for players to gaggle over. Apart from the usual Dynasty mode that sees you take over the entire management of a club for a season, there are also some interesting trinkets like the Slam Dunk Competition and 32-team online league. The only noticeable mode omission is some sort of street mode, but we're guessing that's got a little something to do with EA's other b-baller, *NBA Homecourt*...

What counts in the end though is that if you're a basketball sim loony, you'll want to grab *NBA Live 08*. It's got smashing looks, tight skills, and lots to do. If you already own *NBA 2K8* then trade up. EA's *LIVE* lives. **James Ellis**

## NBA HAS A FIBA, BABY. AND THE ONLY PRESCRIPTION...

Think NBA games are only and all about the USA? That's changed with *LIVE 08* and the introduction of the FIBA World Championship Mode that allows players to select from the top eight international basketball teams, including Spain, Argentina, Greece and a few others and go at it head to head. Unfortunately there's no Australia. What we would have given to see Andrew Gaze come on as an Aussie legend and lay up against Shaq. That'd have to be worthy of a memorial basketball card, wouldn't it?



■ "Is that Spike Lee in the audience. Ohmygohmygohmygod, it IS! I think I'm about to pass out!"

## PROS:

- Slam the opposition
- Tight gameplay mechanics

## CONS:

- No 'street' mode
- Still can't beat *NBA Jam*

**VERDICT:** The devoted will be playing this for the next 12 months, no doubt. Best of its kind.

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:  
**08**





PlayStation 2

Entertainer?



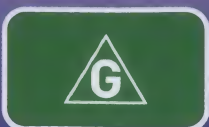
Crooner?



Diva?

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singstar





■ **GENRE:** PLATFORMER  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **DEVELOPER:** RADICAL  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** VIVENDI

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
■ **PRICE:** \$49.95  
■ **HD:** 576i  
■ **WEB:** www.crashofthetitans.com/us

■ **BACK STORY:** Crash Bandicoot was a much loved platform character on the ye olde PSone and PS2. Since he's first outing he's been in games that get just a little bit crappier with each outing. Will *Crash of the Titans* save the day? Hint: No.

# CRASH OF THE TITANS

Crash is back. Again. Shouldn't he be dead by now?

Some of you youngens will be too little to remember when the title *Crash Bandicoot* meant you'd be getting a good game. So come on over and sit on Uncle *Official PlayStation's* knee and we'll tell you wee bairns a story. See, once upon a time a very cool company called Naughty Dog invented a groundbreaking, 3D animated critter who would smash boxes, get bonuses, eat curiously hovering apples and do all that type of platform malarky that was so popular back when the alternative was playing with a hoop and stick.

As popular as Crash was, it inevitably led to several sequels of... well, let's just say 'varying' quality. The once stoic and voiceless, maniacally grinning coot was given a voice. Or more of a groan, really, and the games slowly got more and

more pointless. Naughty Dog evolved *Crash* into *Jak* and the next generation of platformer was born. But is there still a place in the world for our little orange pal? Quite frankly, no.

"*Crash of the Titans* is an awesome game..." is what we would have said 1994. However in 2007 it just looks a bit shithouse. Crash has a band of friends who are kidnapped and he has to rescue them and so forth. You know the story. You've probably played it at least fifty trillion times before. The new wrinkle to justify this sequel is the Titan element.

This means if you best a large beastie you can use it like a mech suit and really cause some havoc. It's a fun little gimmick, and there are about 15 Titans... but the rest of the game is pure button mashy, jumpy-jumpy, platform fare you've

seen sooo many times before.

One cute aspect of *Crash* is the voices of the henchmen. They sound like *The Simpsons's* Dr Frink, but very camp. It's a welcome addition but other games of this type include massive weapons, slick gameplay and actual funny jokes. Also when did Crash start talking like the learning impaired? We don't want to make fun of anyone but when Crash "speaks" he sounds like he should be licking a window or riding in the short bus. Hey, don't blame us – we didn't make the stupid game!

Okay, the game's not a total pile, and yes the Titan element is fun – but over the years they've done terrible things to our Crash. He now has the dubious honour of being the Jar Jar Binks of videogames.

— Anthony O'Connor

## BEASTLY TITANS!

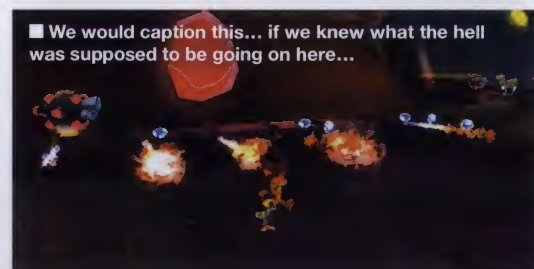
Okay, the game doesn't totally blow. Check out the beast battlin' action. It really is fun... but unfortunately one new element added to a very old formula does not a great game make.



■ That's it Crash, beat up the beastie guys, and get the shiny, um, ball... thing...



■ Crash had the beer goggles on again...



■ We would caption this... if we knew what the hell was supposed to be going on here...



■ Seriously: a Bandicoot wearing jeans and sneakers. Is this what we're working with here?



### PROS:

- The Titans are fun to use
- Henchmen are kinda funny

### CONS:

- Nothing new going on here
- Sorry, but can't Crash die?

**VERDICT:** A valiant failed attempt to breathe some life back into the old franchise.

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:  
**05**



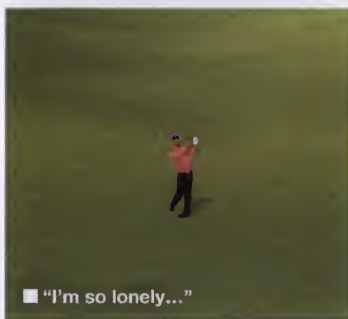


■ Tiger's digital likeness: terrifying...

■ **GENRE:** SPORTS  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **DEVELOPER:** TIBURON  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
■ **PRICE:** \$65.99  
■ **HD:** 576i  
■ **WEB:** www.easports.com

## PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW



■ "I'm so lonely..."

# TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 08

Tiger Tiger, burning in a mediocre fashion

If you love the *Tiger Woods* golf games, some might argue that the only thing you've really seen change over the years is an increase in the creepiness of Tiger's virtual likeness. With the PlayStation's graphic technology going ahead in leaps and bounds in just the way the game of golf hasn't, *Tiger Woods'* PlayStation counterpart now looks just as life-like as those kids in *The Polar Express* movie. But the question really is, what MORE can you do with a golf game? Frankly, if you've played *Tiger Woods* 05, 06 or 07, you're simply getting more of the same here (with added creepiness). Some improvements in the putting area can be found, and Game Face once again

provides fun for endless facial tweaking, but essentially, as Led Zep once said, 'The Song Remains The Same'. One new addition is the Confidence Meter – this analyses your performance shot-to-shot, so if you're "on a roll", you're more likely to hit a winner. Sadly, if you're drowning in a sea of sucking, you may be less likely to recover – much like the real game, so

kudos for annoying realism. On the plus side, this version has more courses than any other *Tiger Woods* game, and once again all the big players are there to be... er, played with. There are the usual mini-games, and you can whack online if you want, but if you own a previous version, it's hard to recommend the cost of this year's upgrade. **Chris Dzelde**

#### PROS:

- The usual professional job, with decent likenesses

#### CONS:

- Not much different from previous iterations...

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:

07

**VERDICT:** Still a fun fairway – but this year has too few innovations to warrant another round.

■ **DEVELOPER:** TRI-ACE  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **PRICE:** \$69.95

## PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

PlayStation.  
BRONZE  
AWARD  
8/10



# VALKYRIE PROFILE 2: SILMERIA

Chicks and spears and bright lights...

With *Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth* finally finding its way here via a solid port to the PSP, and thankfully the sequel has also seen fit to arrive. Sound interesting? You bet.

VP2's game world is unique to RPGs in that, whilst you are given the illusion of a fully-realised 3D world to roam around in, your schizophrenic Valkyrie Princess is limited to moving back and forth across the environments but not around them ala. In this respect it retains the side-

scrolling nonchalance of the original. It's an unusual way of doing things, but the beauty of VP2's lush surroundings and bustling towns makes traversing them an absolute delight.

Combat is a fast-paced mix of real-time manoeuvring and turn-based melees which takes some getting used to. But with such an unshamedly original method of presenting both the game's story and gameplay, it's well worth making the effort. **Chris Dzelde**

#### PROS:

- Strikingly original
- Over 50 characters

#### CONS:

- Lip-synching issues
- Steep learning curve

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:

08

**VERDICT:** Gorgeous and strange, VP2 has a lot to offer the willing.

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# PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **GENRE:** ACTION  
■ **RELEASE:** OCTOBER 2007  
■ **DEVELOPER:** SONY  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** SONY

■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
■ **PRICE:** \$79.95  
■ **HD:** 576i  
■ **WEB:** www.sony.com.au



■ "This marriage is OVER!" (throws ring in a teary rage)

■ Logan took great offense at being interrupted mid poo...

## SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR

Sloppy seconds

When it comes to porting established game franchises, the PSP has always received a bit of a shafting. Stellar games have suffered heavily in translation as they make the leap from home console to handheld; we've had our hearts broken on more than one occasion due to lazy coding and shoddy control mechanics.

*Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror*, however was the exception. Tailor made for the PSP, this game was an exclusive, with the production values one expected from a top PS2 game, featuring the controls to match. The standard was so high, in fact, that Sony has seen fit to pull a Rockstar and do the old 'reverse port switcheroo'.

to the PS2, with barely a lick of work on the other end and resulting, of course, in the gaming equivalent of sloppy seconds.

So, while *Dark Mirror*'s resolution looks sharp on the tiny PSP screen, the PS2 version's 'stretch to fit' philosophy lowers the image quality to the extent that we found it difficult to even read the options menu without squinting. In

addition, the controls, which were so fluid on the PSP, seem clumsier on the PS2.

It's strange to see the 'PSP port effect' in reverse here, and when you consider the PS2's superior architecture, this is unacceptable. We advise you to try this game if you have the chance, but for the love of sweet baby Jesus, try the PSP version first. **Mark Serrels**

### PROS:

- Mostly above average
- Decent control mechanics

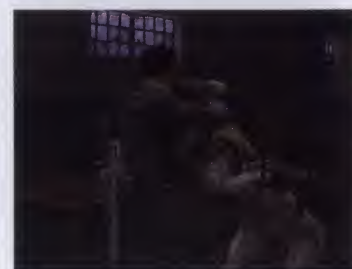
### CONS:

- Struggles in translation
- The PSP version is superior

**VERDICT:** Strictly a case of 'must try harder'. Why the hell is this worse than the PSP version?

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:

06



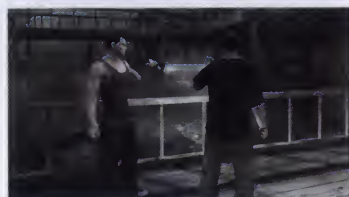
■ "No problem... no problem... anytime... anytime..."

# PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **DEVELOPER:** HYDRAVISION  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** QV SOFTWARE  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **PRICE:** \$49.95

# PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **DEVELOPER:** NOBILIS  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** AFA  
■ **RELEASE:** SEPTEMBER 2007  
■ **PRICE:** \$39.95



## OBSCURER II

Should be relegated into obscurity...

Imagine an alternate universe where the almighty *Resident Evil 4* was never released, where the survival horror genre wasn't redefined, and the *RE* series continued its descent into mediocrity. This would be a time when *Obscure II* would be a half decent game.

Taking a trip back to the real world, however, is a slightly more grounding experience, since *RE4* does exist and the survival genre has been redefined. As a result, *Obscure II* is a game that pretty

much embodies mediocrity.

Scary fixed camera angles along with the scripted scenes of gore are amongst the horror clichés on display, along with a contrived storylines and the kind of voice acting that makes Dolph Lundgren look like Marlon Brando, all combine to make *Obscure II* about as scary as *Superted*.

These flaws almost coagulate into a 'so bad it's good' experience, but not quite. In the words of Indiana Jones, this belongs in a museum. **Mark Serrels**

### PROS:

- Kinda scary
- Well presented

### CONS:

- Archaic control system
- Terrible voice acting

**VERDICT:** Reminds us of a clumsier, more frustrating age. Defines mediocrity.

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:

05

## MOUNTAIN BIKE: ADRENALINE

Going downhill... fast

Mountain biking is about swiftly going downhill with style; this game swiftly goes downhill without it. Focusing on the virtues of speed, concentration and balance the developers of *MB: Adrenaline* forgot to avoid certain pitfalls; namely excessive frustration caused by constant restarts, and lumberjack choppy framerates.

It's not all bad though, the environments are admittedly diverse, the generic music features porno scratch-

guitar (awesome), and it does require some skill to navigate and complete the dexterous challenges. It must be said however that the difficulty is largely a by-product of questionable controls and bewildering semi-visible paths through unforgiving terrain.

Rabid mountain bike fans will appreciate the branded bikes and the fact that it's more technical than its closest rival: *Downhill Domination*. Non addicts, ride elsewhere. **Adam Mathew**

### PROS:

- Offers a unique challenge
- Has porno guitar

### CONS:

- Horrible frame rate
- Perplexing level paths

**VERDICT:** A game that goes downhill flat chat - mostly in a terrible, horrible way.

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:

05





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# PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **GENRE:** SPORTS  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **DEVELOPER:** IR GURUS  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ATARI

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
■ **PRICE:** \$79.95  
■ **GAMESHARE:** NO  
■ **WEB:** www.irgurus.com



■ After a decorated Quidditch career, Harry Potter turned his hand to cricket...

## RICKY PONTING 2007 PRESSURE PLAY

Batting average...

**R**icky Ponting 2007 Pressure Play sees the best cricket series around pocket-sized.

To its credit, the specifically designed Pressure Play mode is well suited to burst play. Pressure Play's mini-missions consist of a variety of objective-based tasks. The World Cup mode is intact also, and cricket remains as accessible as the decent PS2 original.

However, the wheels fall off almost immediately. The loading times, for one, are pretty dire. You'll need to calmly sit through what feels like an age before a match while the game loads.

Unfortunately, there are some major omissions that are significantly tougher to

deal with. The total lack of a test mode is by far the biggest drawback, especially considering it's half of the sport.

The complete absence of commentary is also worrying, because with no commentary at all Pressure Play seems barren and devoid of almost any personality whatsoever. We certainly can't imagine why there isn't any. Is

it a hardware issue? A UMD thing? Shane Warne Cricket '99 on PSone had commentary and that was on a CD.

If you're dying to get your bat and balls out of your pants while on the train without the having people herding their children away from you, Pressure Play should suffice. Otherwise, stick to the PS2 version – it's better. **— Luke Reilly**

### PROS:

- Action remains robust
- Wi-Fi helps

### CONS:

- No tests, no commentary
- Lots of loading

**VERDICT:** It's a decent enough title, but doesn't have the depth of its PS2 big brother.

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:

05



■ Heh heh, that guy fell...

# PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **GENRE:** STRATEGY RPG  
■ **RELEASE:** SEPTEMBER 2007  
■ **DEVELOPER:** SQUARE ENIX  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT

■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
■ **PRICE:** \$69.95  
■ **GAMESHARE:** NO  
■ **WEB:** www.square-enix.com



■ This looks... very Japanese...

## FINAL FANTASY TACTICS: THE WAR OF THE LIONS

Another PSP port par excellence...

**W**ith the steady popularisation of the humble RPG, Square Enix's flagship Final Fantasy series has gone from the niche obsession to a mainstream franchise with an increasingly consistent game world. But whilst the epic adventures of Tidus and Yuna have well and truly entered into gaming folklore, the domain of the strategy RPG still remains a selective one. Let's face it – it takes a particular kind of gamer to get a kick out of what is essentially simplified chess and rock-scissors-paper. Final Fantasy Tactics is pretty much just that, replete with brightly lit characters and an engrossing narrative.

It harks back to the highly addictive

simplicity of the PSone's fabled Vandal Hearts series. There are no vehicles or crazy movement options – your fighters and mages trundle around in one of four directions, let rip a sword thrust or spell, and try desperately to end their turn without leaving themselves wide open. A surprise does come in the form of the Zodiac system – every character

has a starsign and, depending on their gender and compatibility with allied starsigns, some very interesting tactics can be devised. Final Fantasy fans will undoubtedly get the most out of this latest instalment in the world of Ivalice, but strategy hard-nuts might be up for some more intricate, in-depth gameplay.

**— Toby McCasker**

### PROS:

- Beautifully animated
- Addictive gameplay

### CONS:

- Gameplay can be a tad slow
- A little old-school for some

**VERDICT:** Accessible mechanics and a top story make for good times for all.

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:

06



■ Her satirical uncle never gave back her nose...





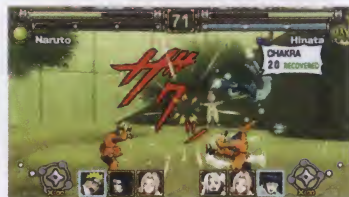
**TAME YOUR FEROCIOUS HUNGER**





# PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **DEVELOPER:** NAMCO-BANDAI  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ATARI  
■ **RELEASE:** OCTOBER 2007  
■ **PRICE:** \$69.95



## NARUTO: ULTIMATE NINJA HEROES

Datte-bayo!

**W**e love a good ninja. And the only thing that tops a good ninja is twenty good ninjas beating six shades of chakra out of out of each other. Like the PS2 version, *Naruto* is a one on one fighter roughly in the same vein as *DBZ Budokai*.

Visually the game is some sexy Jutsu with vibrant cel-shading and a blistering framerate. This, coupled with the theatrical battle chatter and "ka-shing" effects, reproduces the feel of the anime.

While easy to pickup, the fighting system does have some nuances and you'll have to play to your characters strengths, scavenge powerups and use the huge multi-tiered environments to your tactical advantage. However, we did notice that the proceedings could frequently devolve into a button bashing paradise. While the game isn't exceptional enough to warrant a lusty nosebleed, fans of the show should definitely take a look.

— Adam Mathew

### PROS:

- Features 20 playable ninjas
- Blistering cartoony action

### CONS:

- ZERO playable pirates
- Can be a ninja mash-fest

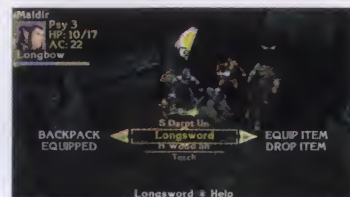
**VERDICT:** Not quite the supreme Hokage of PSP fighters, but worth a look...

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:

07

# PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **DEVELOPER:** KUJU  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ATARI  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **PRICE:** \$79.95



## DUNGEONS & DRAGONS: TACTICS

Roll for initiative...

**M**onopoly belongs in a box. *Risk* belongs in a box. That, however, didn't stop the two of them being brought into the digital domain with the same degree of aplomb. None.

The same criticism could arguably be levelled at *Dungeons & Dragons*. It really does belong in the basement. So what of the latest attempt to bring the pen and paper classic into the digital realm?

*Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics* is a turn-based strategy game developed

specifically for diehard D&Ders. *Tactics* has distilled a staggering amount of *D&D* detail into the game, faithfully abiding by the game's ruleset.

Unfortunately, however, it's only any good if a) You're an absolute *D&D* tragic b) All your mates are too and c) You can put up with the crawling pace, cluttered menu system and general boring...ness. It has quite a bit to offer, but only if you can handle its clunky, geeky and rigid nature.

— Jessica Greene

### PROS:

- Faithful to the source
- Deep. Super deep

### CONS:

- Slow pace, poor menus, better as a board game

**VERDICT:** *Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics* does the job, but fans are better off with a pen and paper.

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:

05

# PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **DEVELOPER:** RED STORM  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **PRICE:** \$79.95



## GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER 2

Who you gonna call?

**D**espite being initially sceptical of Ubisoft's ability to port the PS3's complex tactical shooter over to the PSP, we came away from *Ghost Recon* thoroughly impressed. The visuals have been built from the ground up for PSP and are some of the best the handheld's produced to date.

Full credit also goes to the team for including a range of control options to

best overcome the single analogue stick.

You can go with the default option of aiming with the stick and moving about with the four face buttons or you can opt to have the stick alternate between movement and aiming by tapping the shoulder button.

Well worth checking out: a solid attempt at shrink wrapping a great franchise. — Narayan Pattison

### PROS:

- Good controls make the most of the PSP

### CONS:

- Not exactly perfect for brief, on the train, sessions...

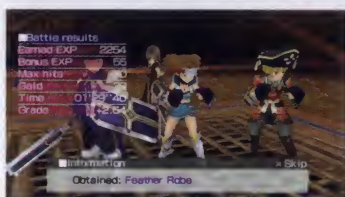
**VERDICT:** Great strategic action. Ubisoft definitely hasn't given up the *Ghost*.

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:

07

# PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **DEVELOPER:** NAMCO BANDAI GAMES  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **PRICE:** \$69.95



## TALES OF THE WORLD: RADIANT MYTHOLOGY

Just when you thought it was safe to turn off the crappy RPG forcefield

**I**n Biblical times there were many plagues, locusts, boils, fire from the heavens and so on. Many believed the Gods were angry.

Well, it looks like they might be pissed off again because we are currently going through a plague of weird, 'cute' RPGs.

It's very easy to slag a game like this off because a) It doesn't do what it does very well and b) There are so many more

unique and better RPGs out there. Hell, take a look at *Folklore*.

The point is this doesn't even offer an average amount of fun - and with *Metal Gear*, *God Of War* and *Silent Hill* all making trips to the PSP, seriously - why would you bother? Everything is so average, and even a bit below, you'll probably want to give this one a miss.

— Anthony O'Connor

### PROS:

- 1000s of ways to change, pimp and build up your team

### CONS:

- Relies on knowledge of previous entries in the series

**VERDICT:** *Radiant Mythology* manages to disappoint at almost every single juncture.

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:

04



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Will Ferrell skates up a storm in *Blades of Glory*. Billy Bob Thornton brings the laughs in *School for Scoundrels*, Tim Allen unleashes the beast in *Wild Hogs*, Eli Roth pours it on with *Hostel II* and more...

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## BLADES OF GLORY (M)

**STARRING:** Will Ferrell, Jon Heder, Will Arnett, Amy Poehler

**DIRECTORS:** Josh Gordon & Will Speck



Chazz Michael Michaels (Ferrell) and Jimmy MacElroy (Heder) are the best male figure skaters in the world. They're also bitter rivals, so when they place equal first at the 2002 World WinterSport Games a

brawl breaks out while they share top spot on the podium. Having disgraced the sport they're both banned for life from men's singles competition. Three years later the two are working dead-end jobs to pay the bills when Jimmy finds a loophole that'll let him still compete in pairs competition. Unable to find a female pairs partner, his search for a partner leads him to Chazz – and his coach convinces them to form the first same-sex pairs team.

The cast and crew have done well to take a one-note joke and weave it into a great comedy. Opinion is split in the office as to whether *Blades of Glory* trumps *Talladega Nights*, but it's definitely in the same league.

Heder does well to keep up with his on-screen partner and his exasperated, effeminate Jimmy gets plenty of laughs. However, as always, it's Ferrell who steals the show as Chazz. An offensive, alcoholic, narcissistic sex-addict Chazz is an absolute fountain of side-spitting one-liners. "Nancy Kerrigan. You an

official here? 'Cause you've officially given me a boner!"

**VERDICT:** Completely absurd and totally hilarious. Aerosmith's 'I Don't Wanna Miss A Thing' will never make you think of *Armageddon* again.

★★★★★



■ "I don't wanna close my eyes, I don't wanna fall asleep, 'cause I'd miss you, babe... and I don't wanna miss a thing"



## PERFECT PAIRS...



### STATLER & WALDORF

These are the kind of old men we want to be. Mean, loud and cruel. In any order. Sitting around, laughing at other people's misfortune, criticising everything and trash talking a frog. Actually, we do that now. Well, except for that last bit.



### ABBOTT & COSTELLO

Ferrell and Heder provide plenty of laughs in *Blades of Glory*, but are they up to scratch with one of the most popular comedy duos of all time? Doubtful. But can Abbott & Costello ice skate? Pffft... of COURSE they can't. They're dead..



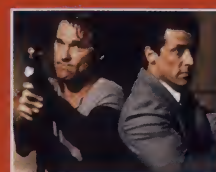
### SIEGFRIED & ROY

These guys stopped their double act when Roy almost became cat food a few years back. We kid you not, just two months ago Siegfried & Roy announced they were gay. No offence guys, but we already know. *Everybody* already knows. Nice vests.



### THE PROCLAIMERS

The Proclaimers came fifth in a poll to find The Most Scottish Person in the World (Sean Connery was fourth). They sing that song, 'I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)'. It makes resident Scot Mark cry. We made that up (Mark only cries to Simple Minds).



### TANGO & CASH

Man, this was tough. It could've been *Starsky & Hutch*, Bill & Ted, or even Jake and the Fatman. In the end, Tango & Cash won out, partly due to Kurt Russell's triumphant mullet and partly because we just watched Sly in the *John Rambo* trailer.



### THE WOODIES

Sure they kicked arse at tennis, but that was doubles tennis. It might as well be netball. No-one watches it. These guys were already pushing the envelope by calling themselves The Woodies. Come on lads, didn't you at least anticipate there would be dick jokes?



# ANIME

## TALES FROM EARTHSEA (M)

■ **STARRING:** Timothy Dalton, Willem Dafoe, Cheech Marin, Mariska Hargitay  
■ **DIRECTOR:** Goro Miyazaki



*Tales From Earthsea* is the first anime film adaptation of any part of the *Earthsea* series, but after winning an Oscar for *Spirited Away* in

2003 Hayao Miyazaki finally received approval from the author. Typically convoluted, in a fast deteriorating kingdom people are beginning to see dragons. Ged, a drifting wizard begins to investigate and meets Prince Arren – a somewhat unbalanced teenager. Cue sequence of odd events. The film hit No.1 at the Japanese Box Office on its opening week and became the top movie in the country for five weeks.

**VERDICT:** Not bad, but it lacks the polish and warmth of Studio Ghibli's earlier films.

★★★★

# COMEDY

## SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS (M)

■ **STARRING:** Billy Bob Thornton, Jon Heder, Ben Stiller, Jacinda Barrett  
■ **DIRECTOR:** Todd Phillips



After the extraordinarily funny and generally well-received *Road Trip* and *Old School* director Todd Phillips seems to be on a roll. The entertaining *Starsky & Hutch*

kept the dream alive, but *School for Scoundrels*, his latest effort, doesn't live up to his past successes of the potential of the cast. Based on a British comedy from the '60s, Dr. P (Thornton) runs a School for Scoundrels where freaks and geeks are turned into confident, alpha males. Fans of frat pack comedies ought to be amused, just don't expect it to be as funny as *Old School* or recent comedy smashes like *Knocked Up*.

**VERDICT:** Thornton and Heder are funnier than this. We've seen *Bad Santa* and *Napoleon Dynamite* – we know.

★★★★

# TV

## MORAL OREL VOLUME 1 (MA15+)

■ **STARRING:** Scott Adsit, Carolyn Lawrence  
■ **DIRECTOR:** Jay Johnston



"Yes kids, we lied about Santa, but Jesus is for real." *Moral Orel* is a stop-motion short comedy series based on the life of young Orel. While he constantly tries to live by the code

of his Christian religion, his morals are slowly breaking down. The bulk of the episode in the first season see Orel hearing a sermon in church on Sunday and proceeding to get into trouble trying to live by the lesson during the week. Be warned though, if you're the kind of person who got offended by *The Da Vinci Code*, thinks dinosaur fossils were put on the Earth to test our faith and 'doesn't believe' in evolution you may want to steer well clear.

**VERDICT:** Great secular comedy, although not quite [adult swim]'s best.

★★★★

## SPIDER-MAN 3 (M)

■ **DIRECTOR:** Sam Raimi  
■ **STARRING:** Tobey Maguire



Although the plot was a trifle full, what with Sandman, Venom and Goblin Junior, the Blu-ray of this comic book extravaganza really brings the goods. Fascinating docs on how the awesome effects were achieved plus a picture so crisp you could cut your eyes on it.

**VERDICT:** An awesome night of entertainment and a Blu-ray must.

★★★★



## PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - THE CURSE OF THE BLACK PEARL (M)

■ **DIRECTOR:** Gore Verbinski  
■ **STARRING:** Johnny Depp

The original *POTC* really was a revelation, with Johnny Depp's bizarre performance the undoubted highlight. In 1080p the movie, in particular the locales, looks terrific.

**VERDICT:** One of the sharpest Blu-ray releases to date, just try your best to ignore the wooden Orlando Bloom.

★★★★



## PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - DEAD MAN'S CHEST (M)

■ **DIRECTOR:** Gore Verbinski  
■ **STARRING:** Johnny Depp

This is where it all got a bit messy. Depp's Jack Sparrow, so spontaneously delightful in the original, seems rehearsed and forced this time round, hence less subversive.

**VERDICT:** Overlong, self indulgent, and frankly a little boring in parts.

★★



## THE FIFTH ELEMENT (PG)

■ **DIRECTOR:** Luc Besson  
■ **STARRING:** Bruce Willis

Luc Besson (*The Professional*) paints the most wonderfully realised future vision since *Blade Runner*.

**VERDICT:** A modern sci-fi classic, definitely worth a Blu-ray purchase.

★★★★

IN JULY *TOP GEAR* PRESENTER RICHARD HAMMOND RAN 25 KILOMETRES HOME FOR HIS DAUGHTER'S BIRTHDAY AFTER BEING STUCK IN TRAFFIC FOR 13 HOURS. LESS THAN A YEAR BEFORE HE NEARLY DIED IN A JET CAR ACCIDENT AT 464KM/H.

# TV

## TOP GEAR - THE CHALLENGES (PG)

■ **STARRING:** Jeremy Clarkson, James May, Richard Hammond  
■ **DIRECTOR:** Various



*Top Gear* may sound like just a car show but it's so much more. The *Top Gear* crew pack their program with the most ridiculous challenges ever conceived. Honestly,

is there anything more entertaining than watching an Englishman sink in a home-made amphibious car? *The Challenges* features seven of the best recent challenges including the epic Bugatti Veyron vs. plane race across Europe, the water-borne Toyota Hilux (the Toybota), the Robin Reliant Space Shuttle (the largest non-commercial rocket in European history) and more.

**VERDICT:** It's a bunch of guys with too much BBC money turning cars into boats and spaceships. It's seriously as good as it sounds.

★★★★★

# COMEDY

## WILD HOGS (M)

■ **STARRING:** Tim Allen, John Travolta, Martin Lawrence, William H. Macy, Ray Liotta  
■ **DIRECTOR:** Walt Becker



Oh dear. What do you get when you take the erm... comedy "genius" of Tim Allen, John Travolta, Martin Lawrence and William H. Macy (who is really slumming

it here) in a movie about middle aged bikers? Well, you get a pretty lame comedy that drives down the middle of the road all the way. The sad thing is the idea isn't bad: mid-life crisis, suburban bikers taking on a real biker gang – lead by Ray Liotta, no less – but at every turn the laughs are all of the "look at the man. He fell down. Now I laugh" variety. There are a few moments of charm, and a cool cameo at the end (we won't ruin it for you) but ultimately the *Wild Hogs* in question are more like 'Slightly Courageous Piglets'.

**VERDICT:** If you want a great Tim Allen comedy watch *Galaxy Quest*.

★★★

# HORROR

## HOSTEL PART II (R18+)

■ **STARRING:** Lauren German, Roger Bart, Heather Matarazzo, Bijou Phillips  
■ **DIRECTOR:** Eli Roth



Cresting on a wave of controversy after the gore strewn original, director Eli Roth follows up the enjoyably grotesque *Hostel* – a movie about obnoxious American dudes

who end up in a Slovakian *Hostel* from whence no one returns – with a sequel about American chicks who go to the same *Hostel*. Frankly just making the same basic movie with women was a rather lazy call by writer and director Roth and the gore is amped up so far this time it almost loses its punch and becomes slightly comical: especially in the 'blood bath' scene.

**VERDICT:** If you're the kind of gore hound that will watch anything for some cool death scenes then *Hostel: Part II* may be for you – but if you like some plot with your splatter then perhaps you might consider a different destination.

★★★★





■ "Man, if these bullets don't stop 'em in their tracks my steely gaze will. Check me out, I am *smokin'*!"



■ "The carrot? It's for my eyesight. I live alone and don't see many women, so I fear I may eventually go blind"

CINEMA

# SHOOT 'EM UP (R18+)

■ **Director:** Michael Davis **Starring:** Clive Owen, Monica Bellucci, Paul Giamatti, Greg Bryk, Stephen McHattie, Ramona Pringle, Jane McLean

**P**art action, part thriller and part comedy, *Shoot 'Em Up* is a crazy fusion of heavily-stylised gunplay, classic Sergio Leone westerns and *Looney Tunes*. Described by many as a 90 minute shootout, *Shoot 'Em Up* follows 'Mr. Smith' (Clive Owen) – a former soldier with a penchant for carrots who just wants to be left alone. However, after Smith aids a pregnant women on the run from a pack of ruthless hitmen he finds himself and the pregnant woman's baby the target of the unflinching Hertz (Paul Giamatti) and his army of henchmen. Check it out when it opens October 18.

## COMING SOON

### HOT ROD

(Rating TBC)

■ **STARRING:** Andy Samberg  
The tall tale of an untalented stuntman who grown up believing he was the son of Evel Knievel's test rider. Opens October 11

### RESIDENT EVIL 3: EXTINCTION

(Rating TBC)

■ **STARRING:** Milla Jovovich  
The third, and apparently final, chapter. Opens October 11

### DEATHPROOF

(Rating TBC)

■ **STARRING:** Kurt Russell  
Quentin Tarantino's half of the Tarantino/Rodriguez double bill, *Grindhouse* – which wasn't released in Australia. Opens November 1

### FRED CLAU

(Rating TBC)

■ **STARRING:** Vince Vaughn  
When Santa (Paul Giamatti) bails his big brother Fred (Vaughn) out of jail he brings him to the North Pole to work off his debt. Unfortunately, Fred's antics may just jeopardise Christmas. Opens November 15

# BUZZ

The latest movie murmurs from home and abroad



## FIGHT THE PUN FLEX

Just as we've all gotten sick of superhero flicks, Will Smith is set to star in *John Hancock*, a movie that centres around a

down and out superhero who has fallen out of favour with the public. The plot thickens when he enters into a questionable relationship with the wife (Charlize Theron) of his public relations representative – try spinning that one positively buddy.

So far it's shaping up to be a live-action *The Incredibles*, only without the family, and Mr Incredible isn't above cutting some serious grass. The movie opens on Independence Day in the states and will strengthen Will Smith's unofficial title as "Mr 4th of July". Tsk... Americans.



## FACTORING IN THE X

Plans for *X-men 4* are slowly starting to solidify, as the executive producers have started signing cast members

and are attempting to secure the big stars of the previous films such as Hugh Jackman, Halle Berry, Rebecca Romijn and Famke Janssen.

Don't start zipping up your lycra just yet though, because big name actors require big moolah, and we'll also have to see if Hugh will be "all clawed out" after his spin-off film *Wolverine*. While it's unlikely, we're daring to hope for the following things; the fourth movie gets made, Nightcrawler returns and Cyclops stays dead.



## YOU GOTTA BECOME WAR...

Fans of retro cheese factor rejoice; there's been a new trailer released for action

revival movie John Rambo and it looks set to deliver the gore in buckets. Due in 2008 the plot centres on a group of Christian missionaries who attempt to hire the "geriatric one man army" (*not* Solid Snake) to guide them up the Salween River in Thailand. The idiotic missionaries go missing after Rambo declines, and what follows is a rescue that has more neck-snapping, explosions, and more compound bow action than you can poke a sharp pointy stick at. Intelligence be damned – bring on the body count we say.



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# GONNA NEED A BIGGER BOAT

Time to go shark hunting...

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■ PRICE: \$1500

■ WEB: [www.neptunic.com](http://www.neptunic.com)

We love this thing. It's a shark diving suit, but it's made of bloody chain mail! The idea of dressing up like a Knight of the Realm, or Schwarzenegger's nemesis in *Commando*, Bennett, to go diving with sharks just makes us chuckle. Also comes with an optional broadsword and jousting lance. Yep, we totally lied about the last part.



## SEABOB JET 5.12

■ PRICE: \$15,500

■ WEB: [www.seabob.de](http://www.seabob.de)

If the chain-mail diving suit is your armour, then this Seabob Jet is your trusty steed, m'lady. This bad boy looks pretty funky *above* the waves but, get this, you can drive this jet up to 40 metres *underwater*! Just imagine, dancing across the sea, clad in your Neptunic war armour, before diving into the depths to do ancient battle with the beasts of the ocean! And the jet can manage speeds of up to 19kmph underwater. You might even be able to keep up with the sharks in this thing.

## POLARISED SUNGLASSES

■ PRICE: \$250

■ WEB: [www.beauvision.com.au](http://www.beauvision.com.au)

And if you didn't already look cool enough wearing frickin' chain mail, whilst driving an underwater jet, these badass underwater sunglasses might just do the trick. These sunnies are also 'polarised', which means that they're perfect for looking at stuff under the water. You do, however, risk looking like an underwater Bono, which is totally not cool. Sharks, much like humans, find politically motivated Irish rock stars a bit annoying and may just decide to take a bit out of your face for your trouble.







PlayStation 2

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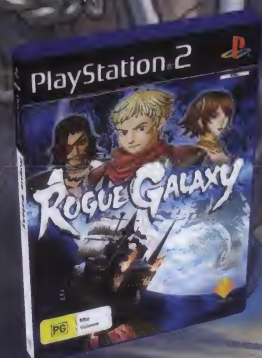
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# DEMOS

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Blu-ray demo disc



## WELCOME KIDDIES!

**G**ather round children, have a sip of your Jesus Juice, and get comfy; poppa's got a brand new bag of sweets for all y'all, and we're sure you're gonna want a taste. Yep, that's right, the demo disc juggernaut just keeps on trucking, pulling drive bys on 'da hataz', and honking horns at the lovely ladies.

You want a piece of this nutritious pie? Of course you do. All that's required is to slide that slinky disc into your PS3 and set your reactions to 'stunned', cause this is the biggest demo disc yet...

How does a fully playable demo of *GRAW 2* grab you? How's about some *Blast Factor* action? Some 1080p-tastic *Ninja Gaiden*? You like? Well that's only the tip of the ice cream cone, cause this disc is a fully fledged monster – give it whirl, tell 'em daddy sent ya.

Hugs and Kisses,  
**Mark Serrels**



### YOUR DISC

Every issue, *Official PlayStation Magazine* will bring you something no other magazine can – playable demos. Our playable Blu-ray disc will enable you to try the very latest PS3 games before you buy, often weeks before release. Why risk your hard-earned cash on a \$120 game when you can try it on our cover-mounted disc? From *MotorStorm* and *Resistance* to *Ninja Gaiden: Sigma* and *GRAW 2*, we'll always feature playable demos of the PS3 games that matter. Throw in top quality video footage of the hits of the future and our Blu-ray disc is the best bandwidth-saving bargain on the shelves.

### DISC PROBLEMS?

If your disc isn't working properly, simply send it back to this address for a replacement.  
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## Playable demos

Roll up, roll up, etc...

### GRAW2

*GRAW2* is the illustrious newcomer to the demo disc this month, bringing with it the classy tactical action we've come to expect from the series. Is it better than the recent *Rainbow Six Vegas*? It's a debate that's been raging in the office of late, but we'll let you be the judge with this demo. One thing's for sure, it certainly is purrry... few shooters can come close to the aesthetic acrobatics seen in *GRAW2*. See for yourself.



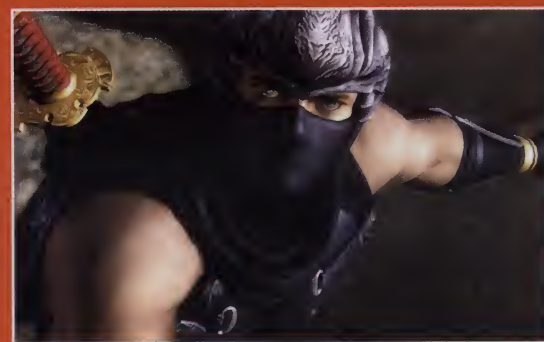
### Blast Factor

*Blast Factor* is one of those games: the kind of old school game that is so tough and so hardcore it could make Mother Teresa headbutt Jesus. But despite the frustrations, the blasphemy and the tears of rage, for some reason you will not be able to put that controller down. Utilising the second analogue stick for aiming, and SIXAXIS motion sensing to tilt the entire gaming screen, *Blast Factor*, in short (apologies in advance), is a blast.



### Ninja Gaiden

So, we all know that ninjas are super cool, so it's a compliment when we say that in *Ninja Gaiden Sigma* those men in black have never looked cooler. Playing this game will make you feel like a bona-fide ninja. Try the first level in this ultra smooth, hyper hi-res masterpiece – *Sigma* will arouse your retina and make love to your frontal lobe.



### Formula One

What can we say about this game, other than it's the closest most of us will ever get to driving at full-on, pubic hair singeing, speeds? If you love F1, then meet your latest mistress – she's a bit of looker, with a tidy undercarriage to boot. So plop this disc in your PS3, and start your engines. What are you waiting for? Stick in the ignition and fire up this bad boy immediately!



### The Rest...

The usual suspects *Genji* and *Ridge Racer 7* are also part of the demo disc action this month, as are last month's *Virtua Tennis* and *Super Rub a Dub*.

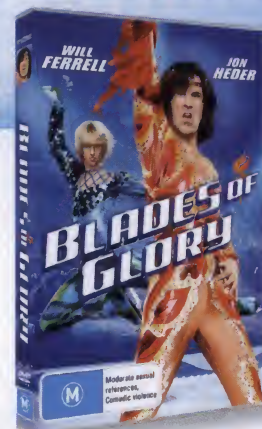




# INTERACTION

# WIN!

## BLADES OF GLORY ON DVD



To celebrate the hysterical release of *Blades of Glory*, Blockbuster® is giving away 10 copies of the DVD. Starring Will Ferrell (Anchorman) and John Heder (Napolean Dynamite) *Blades of Glory* is the tale of two disgraced ice-skaters who team up and return to the rink as an all male, all lycra and sequin clad duet. *Blades of Glory* is jam packed with laughs that you'll want to watch over and over again.

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## PS3

### GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER 2

#### Extra online headgear

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#### ICS-PL helmet

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#### J-E FO helmet

Have a *Double Agent* game save on your hard drive

#### PAS GT helmet

Have a *Rainbow Six Vegas* game save on your hard drive

#### tactical shemagh

Have a *Double Agent* game save on your hard drive

#### Quick Mission Decorations

Perform the following actions to unlock the corresponding decoration

#### All weapons

Beat the game under any difficulty

#### Bulls eye decoration

Have 100% accuracy

#### Hawks eye decoration

Acquire all intels out of combat

#### Iron man decoration

Don't get hit during the mission at all

#### Predator decoration

Have all the fights engaged by you

#### Team ELITE decoration

Have no teammates hit and have 50% of the enemies dead by the hands of your team



## PS2

### TONY HAWK'S DOWNHILL JAM

#### Codes

Enter these cheats at the cheats password option. Note the final four cheats cannot be saved.

#### PointHogger

Always Special

#### EvilChimneySweep

Demon Skater

#### IMissManuals

Enable Manuals

#### FirstPersonJam

First Person Skater

#### IWannaBeTallTall

Giganto-Skater

#### NowYouSeeMe

Invisible Skater

#### DownTheRabbitHole

Mini Skater

#### TightRopeWalker

Perfect Manual

#### LikeTiltingAPlate

Perfect Rail

#### IAmBob

Perfect Stats

#### BirdBirdBirdBirdBird

Really Large Birds

#### ChimneySweep

Shadow Skater

#### ShrinkThePeople

Tiny People

#### RaidTheWoodshed

Unlock All Boards & Outfits

#### AdventuresOfKwang

Unlock All Events

#### ImInterfacing

Unlock All Skaters

## PSP

### MONSTER HUNTER FREEDOM 2

#### Unlockables

##### Gallery Movies

Gallery movies can be unlocked by encountering certain monsters, as well as doing certain things in the game.

##### Behold the Kut-Ku!

Encounter a Yian Kut-Ku

##### Congalala Ecology

Encounter a Congalala

##### Desert Hunter

Encounter a Cephadrome

##### Light In The Dark

Encounter a Khezu

##### Silver World

Complete the "Mountain Gathering" Quest

##### Sterling Hunter

Encounter a Giadrome

##### The Green of the Land

Complete the "Jungle Gathering" Quest

##### The Jungle Outlaw

Encounter a Congalala

##### The Roaring King

Encounter a Bulldrome

##### The Sly Hunter

Encounter a Velocidrome

##### The Tyrant Tigrex

Encounter a Tigrex

##### White Night Dune

Complete the "Desert Gathering" Quest

## CHEAT OF THE MONTH

The pick of the bunch for the cheaters among you...

Kids, Blue Oyster Cult was right, there's no need to fear the Reaper, especially when it comes to the awesome *Guitar Hero II*. This cheat will allow you to use the Ripper's rockin' scythe guitar with any guitarist you so choose.

It's simple. All you have to do is first unlock the Grim Ripper as a playable character. Once that's done, select him, then select another character. If you have unlocked the extra outfits for your characters then the newly selected character should still be in possession of the scythe guitar. Happy rockin'!



## WTF?

Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops

The MGS series is pretty much full of WTF moments, and here's one of them...

'Men's Magazines' have been a fixture in the franchise for a while now, distracting many a horny soldier from his guarding duties. But now one of *Metal Gear*'s own has made an appearance in these dirty rags: the voluptuous and seductive EVA.

Yep, you thought that EVA had disappeared to Hanoi after the events of *MGS3: Snake Eater*, but you're wrong, she was actually making a living as a soft porn star. Drop one of the magazines in your inventory, and scan your first person camera down... yep, that's EVA all right, with her bountiful jugs in full view. WTF?!







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# ARCHIVE

All the games that matter on the PS3, PS2 and PSP!

## FUTURE WATCH

The PS3 games to grab in the coming months

### NEED FOR SPEED PROSTREET

Release: November 2007

Smoke tyres, not cigarettes. It's looks cooler, and it doesn't give you mouth cancer and make your jaw fall off. *Need for Speed ProStreet* has THE best looking smoke to ever grace a videogame – no question. A good move for the series.

### THE SIMPSONS GAME

Release: November 2007

Promising an absolute truckload of fan service and a crazy amount of inane Simpsons references, *The Simpsons Game* ought to be a no-brainer for long-time fans. We're whizzing with the door open, and we love it!

### BROTHERS IN ARMS HELL'S HIGHWAY

Release: Early 2008

After *Medal of Honor Airborne* fell on its face, the need for a truly groundbreaking WWII shooter has never been greater, especially with former genre king *Call of Duty* pulling up stumps and leaving the past behind. The problem is, of course, rumour has it, the game's been delayed. Sigh...

### GRAN TURISMO 5

Release: TBA 2008

The big wheel down at the cracker factory, the master of its domain, the big kahuna, the boss of bosses – *Gran Turismo 5* is the real deal. It'll be a while before it hits the grid, but the good news is those who just can't wait will be able to sate their appetite with *Gran Turismo 5 Prologue* before the year is out – and for free! Nice.

## PS3 TOP 20



### COLIN MCRAE DIRT

*Colin McRae DIRT* is an ambitious, accessible racer with a surprising amount of depth. The best rally sim ever? You better believe it.



### THE DARKNESS

Tentacles and guns – the perfect combination. Stunning, original and gory as hell. You'd have to be dim to miss *The Darkness*.



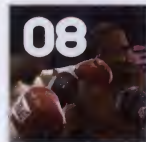
### THE ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION

One of the deepest adventures we've ever laid eyes on. Simply put – awesome. This is arguably the only RPG you'll need for some time to come.



### ENCHANTED ARMS

*Enchanted Arms* is the first proper Japanese RPG for the PS3 and it's by no means a disappointment, but it's a quirky game.



### FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

Still one of the best two-player games around, with visuals that will knock the wind (and most of the teeth) out of you. Great online too.



### HEAVENLY SWORD

*Heavenly Sword* is one of the best games we've seen in ages. A beautiful, yet deep, masterpiece and an awesomely enjoyable ride, albeit a rather short one.



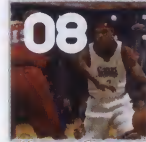
### MARVEL: ULTIMATE ALLIANCE

It's next gen as all hell. On PS2 it was damn good – on PS3 it's a must-have! Great co-op and an exhaustive list of Marvel's greatest superheroes to control.



### MOTORSTORM

Fast, hard, dirty and utterly exhilarating, *MotorStorm* is essential for everyone's PS3. Not even the lack of split-screen can detract from this fantastic racer.



### NBA 2K7

Technically the best b-ball sim on the street, but that won't mean much to average punters. Great, TV-style presentation and commentary should turn heads.



### NEED FOR SPEED CARBON

A bit more Paul Walker than Vin Diesel, but still a solid racer and worth a look for series fans. Naturally, however, *ProStreet* is going to murder it.



### NHL 2K7

A snappy, good looking hockey game with everything a fan could want, unless you already own the PS2 version. Presentation isn't quite as snappy as *NBA 2K7*.



### NINJA GAIDEN SIGMA

*Ninja Gaiden Sigma* is a treasure trove of gaming goodness. Dig it up now. It's tougher than a coffin nail. Not even Chuck Norris can beat this sucker.



### RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN

The perfect launch title for PS3, and possibly the best console FPS ever made. The massive 40-player online deathmatches are more fun than you can imagine.



### STRANGLEHOLD

Won't set the videogame world on fire but packs plenty of frantic fun. The destructive environments build on the genre created by the Woo-influenced *Max Payne* series.



### STUNTMAN: IGNITION

The vehicular equivalent of a 10-hour-long orgasm. Gentlemen, start your boners. *Stuntman: Ignition* succeeds in upending the original in every way.



### TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER 2

A tense, realistic shooter. Well suited for the armchair generals amongst you, but *Rainbow Six Vegas* is better.



### TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX VEGAS

This Vegas adventure is definitely worth a look. A slick, gorgeous, accessible and utterly entertaining tactical shooter.



### TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL DOUBLE AGENT

Obsessive and gripping both online and off, *Splinter Cell Double Agent* will gobble you up. Obtain.



### VIRTUA FIGHTER 5

*Virtua Fighter 5* is as hardcore as fighting games get. Serious fans – start rolling up your sleeves. Tough to master but more rewarding than *Tekken*.



### VIRTUA TENNIS 3

Still the best tennis game around, but the lack of any significant new features is a downer. Still, it's some of the best fun four people can have on one PS3.



# PS3

## ARMORED CORE 4 7

A very respectable mech game and a far better alternative to *Mobile Suit Gundam: Target In Sight*.

## BLAZING ANGELS: SQUADRONS OF WWII 7

It's not without its flaws, but if you want a whiff of the air up there you could do a lot worse.

## CALL OF DUTY 3 7

*Call of Duty 3* is a solid but surprisingly unspectacular shooter.

## DEF JAM: ICON 8

There's a lot to dislike about this game, yet somehow it's won its way into our hearts. Stupid fun. Holla back! And so forth.

## FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER 7

Slick, good-looking and, above all, fun. If only it was about EIGHT TIMES LONGER.

## F.E.A.R. 8

F.E.A.R. is a chilling ride but the graphics could've been a LOT sharper.

## FORMULA ONE 9

Looks awesome and plays great, but for serious racing fans only.

## FULL AUTO 2: BATTLELINES 7

Battlelines is a game that brims with potential but fails to live up to it.

## GENJI: DAYS OF THE BLADE 5

Flashy graphics can't hide the plodding gameplay that belongs on the Atari 2600.

## THE GODFATHER: THE DON'S EDITION 6

Forget The Don, do yourself a favour and pick up another game. The PS2 version still does the job.

## HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX 6

A decent bit of Potter fluff, but its chore-like structure will probably bore most.

## LAIR 5

A massive let-down. It feels rushed and unfinished.

## MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: TARGET IN SIGHT 3

A rubber Godzilla of a title that looks uncooked, plays stiffly and provides no satisfaction. What a pipe blocker!

## NBA STREET HOME COURT 8

*Home Court* is the brashest, most addictive arcade basketball game yet. Instant fun.

## PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END 6

A very shallow slash 'em up that looks the part, but doesn't feel or play the part. Frustrating. Ye be warned.

## RIDGE RACER 7 9

Sexier and more gravity defying than Jessica Alba bungee jumping.

## SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 4

This is an absolutely terrible game. Avoid at ALL cost.

## SPIDER-MAN 3 9

It's the closest you'll ever come to being a superhero this side of *The Darkness*. Web-swinging around Manhattan is tough to top.

## TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8 7

Slick new visuals but still the same old skating and a severely downsized create-a-park feature. Neversoft needs to improve.

## TRANSFORMERS: THE GAME 6

Worth a nostalgic one-night-stand, but that's it. Unfortunately lacking.

## UNTOLD LEGENDS: DARK KNIGDOM 5

Stick to *Oblivion* – no ballads will be sung of this adventure. No stories will be told.

# PS2

## BURNOUT DOMINATOR 8

The reduced price-tag is tempered by the lack of crowd faves like Crash Mode, but it recaptures *B2*'s speed and *B3*'s intensity.

## EVERYBODY'S TENNIS 7

Its lifespan may be short, but it's possibly the ideal family game that will put everybody on level pegging skill-wise.

## FINAL FANTASY XII 10

This is the most superbly crafted RPG out there. You'd be completely mad to miss this one.

## GOD OF WAR II 10

There is no reason not to own this game. Whack on some pants and go buy it now.

## GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES 9

No multiplayer or co-op, but a big improvement on *GTA: Liberty City Stories*. A fitting last hurrah. Can you feel it, coming in the air tonight?

## GUITAR HERO ENCORE: ROCKS THE 80s 8

At its best as good as *Guitar Hero* ever was, but only a handful of decent songs and no bonus tracks makes \$70 a tad steep.

## ROGUE GALAXY 9

The send-off to the PS2's RPGs that *God of War II* was to the action genre. *Final Fantasy* who?

## RUGBY 08 6

Barely a whisker of improvement in two years – not worth it if you own *Rugby 06*.

## SBK-07: SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP 2007 8

A realistic and credible take on motorcycle racing, highly recommended for bike buffs.

## SINGSTAR '90s 8

Not a bad chapter in the series and features decent slab of '90s hits. Could've done with some better quality Australian tracks.

# PSP

## AFTER BURNER: BLACK FALCON 8

Cool, arcade-inspired action – faster than a whippet on 'roids.

## CHILI CON CARNAGE 6

Good humour, dodgy controls. This chili needs a few more habaneros.

## DRIVER 76 7

A heady mix of *Parallel Lines*' best bits, *Driver 76* breaks new ground for itself but not the genre.

## GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES 10

Not only is this a brilliant game, it's arguably the second best *GTA* game available next to *San Andreas*. Get it now.

## METAL GEAR SOLID: PORTABLE OPS 9

Forget *AcId*, this is the game *Metal Gear* fans have been waiting for.

## MONSTER HUNTER FREEDOM 2 9

One of the finest games on the PSP to date.

## PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6 8

Fun, easy to play and challenging enough to offer real longevity.

## V8 SUPERCARS 3: SHOOTOUT 7

It looks good, it sounds good and it has a stack of options – but the handling is more arcade than sim.

## WIPEOUT PULSE 8

Fast, furious and not for the faint of heart. Bad-arse racing action sporting a solid challenge. *Wipeout* fans: aquire.

# MAGIC MOMENTS

Great moments in PlayStation history remembered!



**THE GAME:** *Driver*

**THE CONSOLE:** PlayStation

**THE YEAR:** 1998

**THE MOMENT:** After nine gruelling years there is no doubt left in our minds – the people who designed the final mission in *Driver* were absolute bastards. Don't get us wrong, we understand that the final level of your average game is supposed to be a little taxing. We get it. Life, after all, isn't meant to be easy. That being said we also understand that you'd have to crossbreed Jesus with Superman to have a player exceptional enough to nail this challenge in fewer than 10 attempts. Frustration, thy name is a mission entitled 'The President's Run'.

For those of you unfamiliar with the original *Driver*, it was basically like *GTAIII* minus the prostitutes and the ability to exit your car. Admittedly the game looked like a dog's graphical breakfast but it compensated for it with a fantastic driving model that had a visceral, "escape from the fuzz" feel to it. Playing as an undercover cop named Tanner; your missions were mostly standard walk-in-the-park getaway driving for the mob – until things got ludicrous.

In 'The President's Run' you're expected to chaperone the unprotected leader of the free world across New York in a piece of shit Cadillac, at night, while it's snowing, with the entire metropolitan police force, the FBI and the mafia all doing their absolute utmost to run you off the road and kill you.

Here's a simile to make it live for you: 'The President's Run' is like getting plastered, tying your shoelaces together, pissing on a field of hornets nests and shuffling your way to the safety of a pond, two kilometres away.

For those of you who, like a select few of us at *OPS*, managed to stick it out and defy the odds by conquering this savage beast (without pansying out with the invincibility cheat); we offer you mucho props and commemorate your victory over the best game *Reflections* ever made.



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XK43312	XK43301	Alex Gaudino ft Cryst Water - Destination Calabria
XK43561	---	Good Charlotte - The Dance Floor Anthem
XK43431	---	Pink - Dear Mr President
XK43349	XK48027	Fail Out Boy - Thanks For The Memories
XK43329	XK48006	Avril Lavigne - Girlfriend
XK43258	XK43258	Christina Aguilera - Candyman
XK43268	XK46942	Akon - Dont Matter
XK43513	XK46974	Kelly Clarkson - Never Again
XK43364	XK46026	Gwen Stefani - Four In The Morning
XK43525	XK46990	Justin Timberlake - Love Stoned
XK43508	XK46971	Kelly Rowland Feat. Eve - Like This
XK43350	XK46030	Linkin Park - What I've Done
XK43398	---	Sneaky Sound System - UFO
XK43330	XK46007	Pink - Leave Me Alone (i'm Lonely)
FK43291	---	Camille Jones vs Fedde Le Grand - The Creeps
XK43593	---	Amy Pearson - Don't miss you
XK43318	XK46944	Fergie Feat. Ludacris - Glamorous
XK43188	---	Nelly Furtado - All Good Things (come To An End)

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